SERMONS
FOR
THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

WALLACE-CAMM

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SERMONS
FOR THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

By the late
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Subprior of Erdington Abbey.

with a preface by
DOM BEDE CAMM, O. S. B.,
of the same abbey.

VOL. III.

TRINITY SUNDAY TO THE 24th SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

ST. LOUIS, MO., and FREIBURG (BADEN).
Published by B. Herder.
1910.

NIHIL OBSTAT

St. Louis, die 11 Marii, 1910.

F. G. HOLWECK,
Censor.

IMPRIMATUR

St. Louis, die 11 Marii, 1910.

O. J. S. HOOG,
V. G.

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FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(I. From the Gospel.)

"*Judge not, and you shall not be judged.*" (Luke VI; 37.)

Which of us, my dear brethren, is prepared to appear before the judgment seat of God, there to render an account of all his thoughts, words and works? Is there one amongst us who would not cry out with the Psalmist: "O Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight no man living shall be justified." (Ps. CXLII; 2.) This would, indeed, be the case if we fled like the hermits of old into the desert, and spent the remainder of our lives in bewailing our past sins, and in preparing for the judgment to come. Even then, we should, like those holy anchorites, look forward with fear and trembling to the strict account which the most just Judge will exact of us. But how must it be with us, in our present circumstances, leading, as we do, lives of utter unpreparedness, in which all our thoughts are absorbed in the cares of this world, who banish from our minds all thought and care for the next life? What an awakening it must be for us when the dream of this life is over, and we awake to the dread realities of the next world, when we are face to face with those tremendous verities which make so little impression on us now, death and

judgment, hell and heaven! How shall we then dare to stand in God's presence? Shall we not call on the mountains to cover us and hide us from the searching glance of the all-holy and all-seeing God? (Luke XXIII; 30.) If only, my brethren, there might be a way of avoiding this terrible judgment—one outlet and loophole of escape! But how can this be? Is it not appointed for all men once to die, and after this the judgment? (Hebr. IX; 27.) Is it not decreed that we must all be manifested before the tribunal of Christ, there to render an account of all that we have done in the body?

Yes, my brethren, it is so decreed and appointed. Nevertheless, there is just one way, and no other, of escaping entirely this awful judgment. That way has been pointed out to you in the gospel which you have heard read. "Judge not, and you shall not be judged." Is it possible, my dear brethren? Yes, it is possible; and not only possible, but infallibly certain, for the very Judge Who will sit in judgment upon us, Jesus Christ Himself, has said it. He has solemnly declared that if we do not judge our neighbour, we shall not be judged ourselves. Ah! my brethren, let us try to realize now what will be our feelings at the day of judgment. We shall then look eagerly enough for some way of escaping that dreadful judgment. But we shall look in vain; for it will then be too late. But now we need not look in vain; such an escape is not only possible, but easy, in the way that has been pointed out to you. Oh! what a boon is this! How easily purchased!

That awful judgment, from which we have so much, in fact *everything*, to fear, which the saints themselves have feared, will be altogether omitted in our favour, if only we will spare our neighbour the rebuke of our own judgment. And yet, who is there to be found who fulfills the requisite condition? Who is there, on the contrary, who will not have to sustain severe judgment by reason of his merciless judgment of others. For is not rash judgment the besetting sin of our lives?

Let us, then, consider the malice of this sin; and first, what right have we to judge our neighbour? None whatever; we have not the shadow of a right. Sin is an offence against God. It is, then, for God alone to judge the sinner and punish the sin. And this would be the case even when we are the sufferers by our neighbour's fault. If my neighbour does anything to injure me, the sin is not committed against me, but against God. I have, therefore, no cause of animosity against the culprit on account of the injury; seeing that I have deserved a thousand times more than this. We ought to look upon the offending party as a minister of God's justice, whose intervention God uses for our correction. If we did but regard the matter in this light; instead of feeling resentment we should rather rejoice at having to suffer something in satisfaction for our sins, and at being able to imitate, however distantly, our crucified Redeemer, Who, when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not; but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly.

(I Pet. III; 23.) To judge and condemn belongs, then, exclusively to Him against Whom the sin is committed.

Hitherto, I have been supposing that we are certain of our neighbour's fault. But how are we certain, and when are we certain? The sin lies in the intention of the mind. The outward act is sinful only according as it is prompted by the malice of a perverse will. But which of us can see the inner workings of the mind? Which of us shall dare to judge the intentions which sway the human breast? My brethren, there is One, and only One, Who knows the secrets of the human mind and heart; and that is He Who made us. It is the Lord Who searcheth the heart and the reins and no other. (Ps. VIII; 10.) Therefore, He says: "I will repay, saith the Lord. Revenge to Me." (Rom. XII; 19.)

All that I have said would be equally true if we were irreproachable ourselves. Even if we were utterly sinless, and were incapable of sinning, we should not, and could not, have a right to judge our neighbour. But is it so? Which of us can claim to be exempt from sin? St. John says, and he ought to know: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (I John I; 8.) We know, from one of our Lord's parables, that it is just those people who think themselves better than others, who are most guilty in the sight of God. Such being the case, as we are all alike sinners, for "in many things we all offend" (James III; 2); what right can any one have to judge, much less to

condemn others, even if we know them guilty, which we cannot know? You will remember the severe lesson which our Lord taught such as these in the case of the woman taken in adultery. The world was then, as now, full of people who occupied themselves entirely with other people's affairs instead of their own; who were always prying into their neighbour's conduct, trying to detect them in some transgressions, going about gossiping, repeating, magnifying whatever they could discover, or imagine they had discovered. When they cannot find any real faults, they will put the worst possible construction on the most innocent actions. Such persons as these followed our Lord about, traducing and calumniating Him at every step. On this present occasion, a poor sinner, whom the event shows to have been overwhelmed with contrition for her fault, was brought before our Lord and accused of a grievous crime, the penalty of which, under the Mosaic law, was death. The accusers were the Pharisees, who only sought on this, as on other occasions, matter for accusation against our Lord Himself, according to the judgment which He should pronounce. But their crafty counsels could not prevail against the Incarnate Wisdom; and our Divine Lord baffled their malignant purpose, and sent them slinking away with this stern rebuke: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John VIII; 7.) Whenever, therefore, we are tempted to pass an unfavourable judgment upon our neighbour, let us call to mind this gospel incident. Let us

imagine ourselves in the presence of the great Judge of the living and the dead; let us watch Him stooping down to write our secret sins in the dust of the pavement; and with that dark record staring us in the face, let us, instead of accusing our neighbour, humbly cast ourselves at our Judge's Feet and implore His pardon, even as He pardoned the sinful woman.

I trust, my dear brethren, that the few thoughts which I have suggested to you, will suffice to convince you how odious and unreasonable and unjust is this vice, and will lead you to resolve for the future to be as tender and solicitous in regard of your neighbour's reputation as you are of your own. But there still remains the most powerful motive of all why we should renounce this sinful habit forever. I mean that which our Divine Lord puts befure us in the first words of the holy gospel: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke VI; 36.) "For all have sinned; and do need the glory of God" (Rom. III; 23), says the apostle. But with what assurance can we implore the mercy of God if we will not be merciful to our brother? We have no hope whatever of salvation except through the merciful and undeserved compassion of God. But if we stubbornly refuse to extend our compassion towards our fellow-creatures and fellow-sinners, be assured that we shall not receive compassion ourselves. "With the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again." (Luke VI; 38.) Are not all our

hopes based on Him Who, with His last breath, prayed for His murderers? When He, the innocent Lamb of God deigned to offer up His Blood and Life for those who were taking His life's-blood from Him, shall we constitute ourselves the Judges and executioners of our own brethren? "Judge not," then, my brethren, "and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned, forgive and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you." It is an easy thing to fulfill this great precept; a charitable thought, a kind word, a kindly glance, a gracious act, are simple, easy things; but what a reward will they bring to us? Not a passing and temporary, nor a stinted and trivial reward, like the act which merits it, but an eternal reward and an abundant reward; in "good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall it be given into your bosom." (Luke VI; 38.)

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(II. From the Lesson.)

"*My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*" (I John IV; II.)

The apostle St. John, who imbibed the spirit of Divine charity from the sacred Heart of our Lord, on whose Breast he reclined at the last supper, lays it down as a test by which the true disciples of Jesus Christ may be distinguished, that they should have charity one towards another. They who love their

brethren (and all men without exception are our brethren), shall alone escape the condemnation of eternal death; their names alone are written in the Book of Life; "By this we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." (I John III; 14.) On the other hand, they who have not charity, who entertain feelings of enmity against any one whatsoever, these abide in death. They may pretend to be Christians, but St. John tells us that their pretensions are a lie.

It is well, my dear brethren, that we should dwell on this subject now, by way of preparation for the great festival which is fast approaching—the festival of the holy sacrament of Love, by which we are made one heart, one soul, one mind with our blessed Lord, and through Him with all His brethren, according to the flesh. No injury that could be inflicted on us, can for a moment compare with the outrages of which we have been guilty toward Him. And yet He has in His infinite love and mercy, condoned our offences and given us not only the right hand of His friendship, but opened His sacred Heart to receive us to His closest embraces. How is it possible, then, that we can be worthy of His love, when we refuse to pardon our offending brother the paltry offenses which we imagine he may have committed against us?

St. John does not hesitate to say that whosoever is guilty of hatred is guilty of murder. (I John III; 15.) For, by entertaining those feelings of enmity, one has already committed murder in his heart. The

actual shedding of blood is but the outward consummation of the malevolent intention of the heart. The Commandments of God are binding upon our whole being; upon all our faculties, upon our thoughts as well as upon our words and actions. Hence, the Commandment, 'thou shalt not kill,' is binding upon our thoughts and sentiments, so as to prohibit every malevolent disposition or ill-will towards any of our brethren. It is not sufficient therefore, to refrain from injurious actions, nor from injurious and exasperating words; we must also watch over every movement of our hearts, and check at once those ebullitions of anger which arise spontaneously in our breast. Otherwise, if we deliberately entertain the rancorous sentiment, we shall have to render an account for it at the bar of Divine Justice; for the God Who will judge us is One Who searches the heart and the reins, and nothing is hidden from His sight. (Ps. XII; 10.) Again, the duty of forgiveness of injuries has been inculcated by our Lord, under that parable in which He represents Himself as a Master who has forgiven his servant the heavy debt which he owed him; and who will, therefore, have no mercy on those who fail to extend the like mercy towards their fellow-servants, who may be indebted to them. (Matt. XVIII; 24, 35.)

Before, then, we approach the altar of God, to seal our reconciliation with Him in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, let us first go and be reconciled to our brother, if he have aught against us; and then let us come and offer our Gift, that priceless Gift,

(Matt. V; 23, 24) which He Himself has put in our hands, His Own Divine Son, Who is the propitiation for our sins. (I John II; 2.) "Before all things," says the apostle, "have a constant mutual charity among yourselves." (I Pet. IV; 8.) For every gift and grace which God has to bestow, follows in the train of charity. Where there is no charity, there can be neither grace nor life; "without charity, I am nothing." (I Cor. XIII; 2.)

No doubt it is difficult in some cases to love all, especially our enemies. But have we not been told that the way to heaven is not easy: that it is beset with difficulties; that, in order to get there, we must do violence to ourselves, to our corrupt inclinations? (Matt. XI; 12.) If we wish to gain heaven, we must refrain from those things which are pleasing to our natures, and we must constrain ourselves to do that which is distasteful to us. Now, all this, beyond question, is not an easy task; but, if we would be saved, it must be done; and if we will not undertake it, then we must submit to the consequences. But do not deceive yourselves, and imagine you can at the same time serve God and follow your own inclinations. But, difficult as the task may be, it is by no means impossible, for our Lord has made it possible by imposing on us the obligation to do so (and He never commands that which is impossible); and also, by Himself setting us the example.

"In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us." (I John III; 16.) Bear in mind that those for whom He died

were His enemies. For every sinner is at enmity with God. What He has done, we also can do. For in becoming man, He gave us power to become the sons of God. He clothed Himself with the infirmity of our flesh, in order to invest us with the mantle of His Divinity; (John I; 12) and that we might have no excuse for our pusillanimity, He has even given Himself to be the food of our souls, that we might be inflamed with the fire of charity which burns in His Own Divine Heart. By uniting Himself to us, He transforms us into Himself; He becomes our very life, so that we are enabled to triumph over the weakness of our nature; and in Him, and through Him, we are able to do all things, (Phil. IV; 13) and to follow His example, even to the extent of laying down our lives for the brethren. In order, then, to be worthy of Holy Communion, we must lay aside all animosity, and be in charity with all.

But, my brethren, it will never do for us to be satisfied with this very meagre kind of charity, which consists in the mere absence of hatred and malevolence; but we must go on to aspire to a much higher kind of charity. We ought to love one another as God has loved us. The charity of God towards us does not consist merely in taking us to His forgiveness; but He has poured out the infinite treasures of His love upon us. Our love for our neighbor, therefore, should be a love resembling that which led our Divine Lord to lay down His life for us, when as yet we were His enemies. It should be a supernatural love, which of course, we can never attain by any

efforts of our own; but we must have recourse to supernatural means, and chiefly the devout reception of holy communion. This, indeed, was the object for which the blessed Sacrament was instituted: to nourish in our breasts the flame of Divine charity; that charity whose primary object is God, but which, necessarily, extends itself to all those whom God has created and redeemed and called to the participation of His eternal inheritance. It is a love which does not spring from a corrupt and impure source; it is not base, sensual, selfish or interested; but its source is the sacred Heart of our Lord, and it overflows upon all alike without distinction. It is pure and disinterested; it is not to be daunted by any difficulties or obstacles. St. Paul has given us a beautiful description of this charity, where he says: "Charity is patient, is kind; Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (I Cor. XIII; 4, 7.)

Such, my brethren, is the kind of charity which all Christians are required to practice: a supernatural charity, which discovers in the object on which it is exercised, the features of Jesus Christ Himself. There are many generous persons, but few who are charitable; many who bestow their alms in a munificent way, who look upon it as a condition of their position in life and an accessory of their greatness; but how few are those who are really animated with the spirit

of true charity, who overflow with a heartfelt love for all, for Christ's sake! Such as these alone have true charity, because their charity is not self-seeking; it is the spontaneous overflow of the love of God with which their hearts are filled. Again, there are many who are fond of drawing distinctions between those who are, what they term, deserving objects of charity, and those who are not; a distinction unknown to the gospel; a distinction which generally results in their not finding any 'deserving' objects at all. It is, in reality, only a pretext to cloak their want of Christian charity.

Charity, then, should be without discrimination; because the one Object of it is our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is represented to us by every one of our fellow-creatures. Moreover, our love should be, after the example of His love, without discrimination; for He died for all alike, and He gives His grace to all alike, and in the blessed Sacrament of the altar, He gives Himself to all alike. He suffers Himself to be united to all who approach to receive Him, worthy and unworthy. Let this consideration of the love which our Lord has manifested towards us, in instituting this holy sacrament move us to imitate His example; that by the practice of Divine charity in this life, we may merit to be translated to the Kingdom of God's love; there to be united to Him in the bond of perfect love through all eternity.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(III. From the Gospel.)

"*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" (Matt. XXVIII; 19.)

The truths of the Christian religion are termed mysteries, because in all of them, even in those most intelligible to our limited capacity, there is something which surpasses our comprehension. For they are the truths of God, of that infinite Being Who is Truth Itself, and Who alone can comprehend His own Nature; from Whom we derive whatever truth we know, and whatever capacity we have to know it. Whenever the soul, in its thirst after truth, turns aside from the contemplation of that partial truth which is embodied in the visible things of this world, to consider the Supreme Truth, Who is the Source and Fountain of all truth, it stands as it were on the brink of an abyss, separated from the object of its search by all the immensity of God's eternity and Infinitude. What is the soul to do? How shall it comprehend the incomprehensible? How shall it attain the inaccessible? How shall it enjoy the incommunicable? Did God bestow on the soul of man that thirst after truth, that desire of union with Him, of happiness in Him, in order to mock that thirst and that desire by ignorance of the truth, and by eternal separation from the happiness which He is, and which He imparts? Surely, such a supposition would be incompatible with the attributes of a God

Who is infinite Goodness, as well as infinite Truth and infinite Bliss. No, God has supplied a bridge whereby the soul may pass over that abyss fearlessly and securely, in order to attain its ultimate end; and that bridge is Faith. We could never have reached God; so God has visited us, in order to draw us to Himself. He has infused into our souls a divine habit, whereby the soul is enabled to comprehend its Creator, not with the eye of sense, but with the eye of faith; not with the light of reason, but with the light of grace. Faith, then, is one of those three fundamental virtues which unite the creature to the Creator, and restore the soul to its primitive union with Him Who created man upright in the beginning.

But, my brethren, of all the mysteries of our holy religion, what can be more incomprehensible than the one we celebrate this day; the mystery of the adorable Trinity of Three Persons in one God? If the judgments of God are so incomprehensible, and His ways so inscrutable (Rom. XI; 33) in His dealings with us, and in the visible elements of this world, how much more incomprehensible and inscrutable must be the ways of God in the holy Trinity, in that mysterious relationship of the Three Divine Persons Who subsist in the Unity of the Godhead! Of which mystery, we might say what St. Paul says of the mystery of atonement: "of Whom we have much to say, and hard to be intelligibly uttered." (Heb. V; 11.)

What then is meant by this mystery of the Holy Trinity? From the authoritative explanation of it

given in the Athanasian Creed, we learn that the Father was made by no one, nor was He created nor begotten. He exists from all eternity, and is not produced from any other, but is Himself the origin of the other Two Divine Persons. Hence, He is the First in order, though He does not precede them in time; for neither is there such a thing as succession of time in God, where all is eternal. The Son is from the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. That is, the Father comprehending His Own infinite perfections, in that comprehension begets the Son, Who subsists in that same Divine Nature which the Father is, and is called the Son, because He is the perfect Image of the Father's Substance, being that very Substance Itself. He is also called the Word, because He is the reflection of the Father's Glory, and the perfect utterance of the Divine Majesty, being that Glory and Majesty Itself. The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son; not created, nor begotten, but proceeding. That is, the Father, contemplating with infinite complacency, His Divine Reflections in the Son; and the Son, likewise, contemplating with infinite complacency that Nature which He has, communicated from the Father; both Father and Son in that eternal complacency as by one principle, in the oneness of Nature which Both possess, breathe forth the Holy Spirit, Who thus subsists as the Fruit of that Complacency of Father and Son. Hence, He is called the Love, and the Gift, and the Unction, because all those names express His relation to the other two

Divine Persons. There is, therefore, one Father, not Three; one Son, not Three; one Holy Ghost, not Three. And, in this Trinity of Persons, one is not before or after another; one is not greater nor less than another; but all Three Persons are alike eternal and equal. So that, by all means, as it has been said before, we must worship the Unity in the Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity.

But, my brethren, whilst we thus strive to attain some comprehension, however inadequate, of this profound mystery, let us not forget the saying of the pious author of the Imitation of Christ, that he had much rather please the Holy Trinity by humility than discourse learnedly about it. As it is the happiness of the saints in heaven to see the blessed Trinity face to face, and seeing It, to adore; so it is our duty on earth to adore, not seeing, but believing. Now, faith is not a mere act of the understanding, it is much more; an act of the will, which consists in submitting our weak reason to the voice of God made known to us by the Church. So that it is not by any means the most learned who believe most firmly, but those whose hearts are most submissive to divine grace. Nay, we are even told that "God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them to little ones." (Luke X; 21.) Again, the apostle, speaking of those who are called to the knowledge of the truth, says that there are "not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound

the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound the strong; and the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to naught the things that are." (I Cor. I; 26, 28.)

Hence, the first and chief quality of a lively faith in this mystery is *humility*—a quality which is suggested by the nature of the mystery itself. For who that adores the Holy Trinity can fail to feel abased and humbled when he considers Whom he adores, and Who he is that adores? What a contrast is here exhibited between the abyss of Majesty and Holiness and Truth, on the one hand, and on the other the abyss of nothingness, sinfulness and ignorance! As often, then, as we bless ourselves in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, let us reflect a moment, and humble ourselves profoundly before the throne of infinite Majesty which we are addressing.

Another quality of a lively faith in this mystery is that it should be active and energetic. How does the activity of our faith show itself in regard to this mystery? In this way; that while we profess our belief in the Three Divine Persons, we should be careful to devote to their service and worship those three faculties of the soul which, the Catechism tells us, were given us in the likeness of the Three Persons in One God—our will, our memory, and our understanding. These powers of the soul guide and rule all our actions through the whole course of our life;

and since we are commanded to love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with all our strength and with all our mind, let us dedicate these faculties to the honour and worship of the Three Divine Persons; and not degrade and pervert them to the service of the world, the devil, or the depraved inclinations of the flesh. Our faith, moreover, will be an active one, if we bear in mind that to each of these Three Persons is specially attributed some office and work of love in our regard, which consequently, demands our gratitude and faithful correspondence to the grace received. To the Father is attributed the work of creation and preservation; that we may devote entirely to His service the being for which we are indebted to Him. To the Son, the work of redemption; that we may conform ourselves to His likeness, by walking in His Footsteps, by taking up our cross and following Him; that so we may partake of the fruits of that redemption: "You are not your own, for you are bought with a great price" (I Cor. VI; 19, 20); which price is no less than the precious Blood of the immaculate Lamb of God. To the Holy Ghost is attributed the work of sanctification; that we may hunger and thirst after that sanctifying grace which is given us in the holy Sacraments, and that our souls may be replenished with His sevenfold gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and the fear of the Lord." (Is. XI; 2, 3.) "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Charity of

God, and the Communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." (II Cor. XIII; 13.)

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(IV. From the Lesson.)

"Of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things; to Him be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. XI; 36.)

We celebrate to-day, my dear brethren, the festival of the most Holy Trinity, the most august Mystery of our holy faith, the very foundation of our religion. The first sacrament which we receive, which makes us Christians, is administered to us in the Name of the Holy Trinity. And so all through life, every act we perform, every step we make, is placed under the protection of the sacred sign and symbol of this mystery; rendering them so many witnesses of our worship of the most Holy Trinity. Hence, faith in this mystery is the most precious treasure which the Church possesses. It is that which justifies the sinner, sanctifies the just, baptises the catechumen, crowns the martyr, consecrates the priest, saves the world. At the same time, how am I to speak to you of this mystery? Must I not say, with the prophet, that I am but an infant and know not how to speak to God's people? I can but take comfort from the answer which God made to the prophet: "Fear not, for it is I that send thee: and I will put in thy mouth what thou shalt say to this

people, and I will be in their hearts, that they may listen." (Exod. IV; 15.)

1. Let me then say first, that this mystery furnishes us with an opportunity of rendering to God the greatest act of homage of which faith is capable. It is a sublime act of faith, because it is faith in that which is wholly incomprehensible. What can we know of God? When we say God is just, is powerful, is holy, is merciful, none of these terms would be correct unless we further qualified them with the character of incomprehensibility. In order to be exact, we should say, God is powerful, with a power which I do not comprehend; just, with a justice altogether different from anything that I have experience of; holy, with a holiness which infinitely surpasses the limits of my comprehension; and so of all God's attributes. We must invest them all with this incomprehensibility; and there, as St. Augustine observes, where God appears to us most incomprehensible, there do we know Him best, there may we glorify Him most, and there does our faith render Him the most perfect homage. Now, I ask in what mystery of the Christian religion does God render Himself most incomprehensible to man, if not in the Trinity? What do we comprehend in this mystery beyond this, that we comprehend nothing? Hence, the prophets and inspired men of God, to whom this revelation was first made, at one time represented it as an inaccessible Light; at another as shrouded in impenetrable darkness. It is for them, as for us, an unfathomable abyss.

All we can do is to prostrate ourselves in humble adoration before the most holy Trinity, and exclaim: O, my God! I believe all that Thou hast revealed of this incomprehensible mystery. And if my reason rises up in rebellion, I hereby sacrifice it at the foot of Thy altar. I believe in the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Nature; and for this faith I am prepared to shed my blood if necessary. As there are Three Who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; so let us render to this mystery the threefold earthly testimony of the Spirit, the water, and the blood. (I John V; 7, 8.) It would seem, however, that we are not worthy to render to this mystery the testimony of our blood. There was a time when the martyrs sealed this testimony with their blood; when, as the great Bishop of Barcelona, St. Pacian, expresses it: "They knew how to die for this truth, if they did not know how to dispute about it." Nevertheless, my brethren, we may still, and we ought, to render to this mystery the testimony of our spirit by holiness of life. In vain do we imagine to ourselves that we should die for this faith, if at every moment we are found ready to betray it for a vile pleasure, a momentary gratification.

2. In the next place, let us consider how this mystery is the ground-work of all our hope and confidence. When we are instructing any one in the elements of the Christian religion, how do we begin? We begin with the most sublime and unintelligible of all mysteries, that of the Trinity. In human

science we begin with that which is most simple and easy, and rise gradually to that which is more difficult and recondite. But in the science of faith the first lesson is a summary of all that is incomprehensible; faith makes its apprenticeship by rising at once to its masterpiece—the confession of one God in Three Persons. You take a child in whom reason is only just beginning to dawn, who can hardly lisp, and you tell it, 'There are Three Persons in one God.' Such is your first lesson to that child; you begin with that which is the crown and completion of the most subtle investigations of the finished theologian. Now, why is this? Because faith in the Holy Trinity is the foundation of all our hope, the source of all our merit, the principle of all holiness, the beginning and root of all justification. It is the fundamental article, without belief in which, salvation is impossible. If I do not believe this, I have nothing to expect from God; if I do believe it, then I hope and expect everything from Him. It is, as we have seen, the most sublime act of our faith, and for that very reason God wills that all our happiness should depend on it also.

For this reason, every prayer and act of ours commences with the invocation: 'In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;' a practice which has come down to us from the apostles. In the same spirit, holy Church addresses all her prayers under the invocation of the Three Divine Persons; more than a hundred times a day she obliges her sacred ministers to repeat the hymn of praise:

'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.' For she knows well that we cannot utter this song of praise too often; and that great solitary who spent his life of penance on the top of a pillar, practiced no other exercise but this, during the long years of his penance. If, my brethren, every time we uttered this prayer, every time we blessed ourselves in the name of the holy Trinity, we did so with the same piety and devotion as this holy anchorite, what merit should we not gain in the sight of God? What fruits of the spirit would it not yield to our souls? But when we utter those words without reflection and with a wandering mind, thinking of everything else, or thinking of nothing, what reward or fruit can we expect? Do we not, on the contrary, offer an insult to the Three Persons of the most holy Trinity Whom we address? The confession, then, of the holy Trinity, made with due respect and devotion, furnishes us with the surest ground of confidence and hope in the mercy of God.

3. Let us in the third place, consider how the same confession is a powerful motive and perfect example of the exercise of Christian charity. That our faith in the Holy Trinity is the motive why we should exercise fraternal charity, is eloquently insisted on by St. Paul, when he says: "I, therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you," to do what? To support "one another in charity;" to "be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." What motive does he advance on which he founds this

obligation? It is this: You have all one and the same God, one and the same faith, one and the same baptism. You are all one body, which is the Church; is it not then right that you should have one and the same Spirit? "One body and one Spirit; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. IV; 1, 5.) What a contradiction it is that we who unite together to worship the same God, should differ from each other on any other subject! In this same Lord Whom we adore we recognize a Father Whose children we all are; a Son whose brethren we all are; a Spirit Who animates and inspires us all—'One Lord.' Shall then the children of the same Father live together as strangers, not to say as enemies? Shall the brethren of the same Son not treat each other as brethren? Shall those who are possessed by the same Holy Spirit differ from each other in their sentiments?

Just as there is no keener sword of division amongst men than religious differences, which go so far as to sever the most inviolable ties of nature, so should religious unity constitute the most sacred and inviolable bond of affection. Why, even the heretics give us an example in this respect. If the common tie of a false religion prompts them to succour one another, to be jealous of the common interests of all, to lavish their benevolent aid on their indigent members, what a shame it would be if the unity of the true faith did not bind us closer together, than they are bound by common error! What a scandal if we are divided amongst ourselves; if we treat one another

as enemies! Ah! my brethren, all this hatred, this jealousy, these desires of revenge, this contempt for our neighbour, those sharp and sarcastic remarks which escape us, how unworthy are they of the Christian profession; how offensive to that adorable Trinity in whom we believe and hope.

Let us now see, my brethren, how this great mystery furnishes us with a sublime model how to exercise paternal charity. The teaching of our blessed Lord is this: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John XIII; 34.) But that is not enough. Not content with proposing Himself as our Model, the example of a God Incarnate, Who laid down His life for us; our Lord must needs search in the Bosom of the Holy Trinity for a perfect model of the love we should feel for one another. "Holy Father," He says, speaking to His eternal Father, "keep them in Thy Name, whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We also are." (John XVII; 11.) Such, my brethren, is the sublime example of mutual charity which is proposed to us. We ought to be able to say in respect of each other, what our Lord said, speaking to His eternal Father: "All My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine." (10.) "See, then, and do, according to the pattern which was shown thee on the mount." (Exod. XXV; 40.) Let us humbly implore the blessed Trinity to help our infirmity. Father Almighty! Thou hast created us, and canst turn our hearts and wills withersoever Thou willest. Coequal, coeternal Son! made man

for us; Thou hast gathered us all together under the one law of love. Holy Spirit! Substantial Love of Father and Son, through Thee is charity poured out in our hearts. O adorable and amiable Trinity! from Thy Bosom we come forth, and into Thy Bosom Thou willest we should return; unite us in the bonds of love here, as we hope to be united with Thee, and with one another in a happy eternity.

CORPUS CHRISTI.

(From the Gospel.)

"*He that eateth this Bread, shall live forever.*" (John VI; 59.)

During this most sacred solemnity of Corpus Christi, in which we commemorate the ineffable love of our Lord Jesus Christ, in instituting the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, our thoughts are necessarily concentrated upon that great mystery. But as in so vast a subject we are compelled to limit our consideration to some particular portion of it, I propose to speak of one very important part, namely, the effects of the holy sacrament upon those who receive it worthily. They may be summed up in these four: it confers immortality; it nourishes the recipient; it unites us to Jesus Christ; it makes us live with a divine life.

1. It confers immortality. Our Lord has said: 'He that eateth this Bread shall live forever.' All things that live have an instinctive horror of death; and

every rational being, by a law of nature, yearns for immortality. It was in order to satisfy this desire that the living Bread came down from heaven (51), to communicate Himself to men, that they might receive the seed of immortality, which should fructify unto eternal life. This immortality is twofold, even as our nature is twofold. We have a soul and a body; and there is the life of the soul and the life of the body. Moreover, this life is twofold. There is the natural and the supernatural life. Now, the holy Eucharist is the seed of immortality both to soul and body. But the life that it bestows and preserves is not the natural, but the supernatural life. The soul is by nature immortal; it cannot of itself die. This natural life the holy Eucharist neither gives nor takes away. But the soul is capable of supernatural death, which consists in separation from God; and of supernatural life, which consists in union with God. It is this kind of life, union with God, which the blessed Sacrament confers upon us.

Again, the body is, by nature, mortal; and the holy Eucharist does not take away from the body this necessity of death. But the body is capable of supernatural immortality, whether in the state of accursed union with the reprobate soul, or of blessed union with the soul in glory. It is this latter kind of immortality which the holy Eucharist confers upon the body. How then is this mystery accomplished? It is because soul and body, being fed and nourished with the Body and Blood, of Christ become one with Him; so that, in the general resurrection, in raising

up our bodies to be united with our souls in a blessed immortality, He is in fact raising up His Own Body and uniting it to His Own Soul, after the manner of His Own resurrection. "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (55).

2. The holy Eucharist feeds and nourishes the recipient. Food and nourishment are necessary for the life of the body, because that life is precarious. They are equally necessary for the *supernatural* life of the soul, because that life is also precarious. All living things must be nourished, or they will inevitably perish. Now, our blessed Lord has in His infinite Goodness, provided our souls with the most sublime Food, in His Own Body and Blood, which being received by the faithful, becomes the very life of their soul. The holy Eucharist produces upon the Soul effects similar to those which material food produces on the body. The food is converted into the living substances of the body; it is distributed to every part, renewing and repairing that which is worn out and defective, giving life and vigour, and bringing to maturity that which was undeveloped; until the whole body reaches its proper stature and bulk.

Thus, too, the holy Eucharist acts upon the soul. It maintains spiritual life and vigour; it strengthens the Soul against temptations; it repairs and renews whatever is worn and defective in our Spiritual state through the wear and tear of the conflict which we have to wage daily with the enemies of our soul. It causes the soul to grow and develop in sanctity and

perfection, bringing to maturity the germs of virtues and seeds of piety; until we reach the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. IV; 13.) For this is the end of the holy Eucharist, to form Christ in us; that we should be transformed into Him. But if the blessed Sacrament is the Food of our souls it must be our habitual food. If one meal in the year will not keep our body alive, how can we expect our souls to live and thrive upon one or two communions in the year? If, then, we have a due regard for our souls, we shall come as often as possible to refresh our souls with this Bread of life. But some may say that they are not worthy to communicate often. Well, is any one worthy to communicate at all, if we consider whom we receive? Must not the greatest Saint say: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof." (Matt. VIII; 8.)

But this is not the question. Our Lord has commanded us to receive Him. Hence, we have no alternative but to obey. Provided, therefore, you be in the grace of God, and in good dispositions, come as often as you can. Do not be kept away by worldly occupations and cares, nor by temptations, nor by the evil conduct of those with whom you live, nor, in fact, by anything else, remembering what the apostle says: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. VIII; 38, 39.) Do not say, 'I am not good enough

to go often to holy Communion.' We do not receive it because we are holy; but that we may become holy. As well might the sick man say: 'I will not take food or medicine, because I am so weak and ill.' Do not say: 'I have so many temptations that I am not fit to receive.' For the very reason why we receive is that we may be able to resist temptations. As well might the soldier say: 'I will not arm myself, because I have so many enemies to encounter.' Do not say: 'I am so worried by the misconduct of husband or wife or children or neighbors, that I am not in a fit state to receive.' For it is in order to bring grace and tranquility to our souls that this Divine banquet has been prepared for us. "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (Matt. XI; 28.)

3. The holy Eucharist unites us to Jesus Christ. In this the love of our Lord has manifested itself in the most wonderful way. Love tends to union with the object beloved. In instituting the holy Eucharist, our Lord has shown the immensity of His love, by thus giving us the means of forming the most intimate union possible with Himself. One would have thought that His love had exhausted itself in becoming Man for our sakes; in dying on the cross and shedding the last drop of His Blood for us. But all this did not satisfy His love. He could not rest until He had become One with us, entering into us, and establishing a union, which shall not be separated even by death. This union is not merely a moral union, through the will and affections, but it is a

physical union in which His Body and Soul are united to ours, and His Blood mingles with ours. Not only are we united to Him, but we become in a mysterious way changed into Him. For, by the power of the Divinity, which dwells in Him corporally (Col. II; 9), He deifies our nature so that we become, as St. Peter says, partakers of the Divine Nature. (II Pet. I; 4.) O ineffable love of our Divine Lord, Who is so eager to unite us to Himself that He could not wait until the next life, when all who live shall be forever united to Him, but He must needs begin that union now, in this life, to prepare us for that eternal union! O ingratitude of man, who shows his indifference to this manifestation of Divine love, by neglecting this most holy sacrament, and frustrating our Lord's ardent desire to be united with him in the bonds of holy Communion!

4. The holy Eucharist communicates to our souls a Divine principle of life, whereby we live the life of God on earth. We receive God Himself. He becomes our Food. Yet we do not change Him into ourselves, as it happens with corporeal food; for that is impossible; but He changes us into Himself. For it is necessary that the more powerful element should assimilate the less powerful. Thus is the desire of His Heart fulfilled; that the Life which He receives from the Father, He might communicate to us: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so, he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." What pure and holy lives, therefore, ought we not to lead who live by the very life

of the holy Trinity, the life eternal! If we do not lead such pure and holy lives, if our lives are full of imperfections, it is not the fault of the holy communion; but it is the fault of our dispositions, of our imperfect preparation, of our want of faith and earnestness, of our worldly conversation. One good Communion is able to make us perfect in sanctity.

Let us, then, strive henceforth to make our Communions more profitable to our souls, by proving ourselves more carefully. "But let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of the chalice." (I Cor. XI; 28.) Our Divine Lord, Who knows all our weakness, does but require a good will on our part; and His grace will do the rest: so that His Body and His Blood may become in very truth to us the seed of immortality; the food and nourishment of our souls in the way of perfection: the bond of union between us and Himself; the principle of Divine life within us, enabling us to live the life of grace here, and come to the participation of the Life of glory hereafter.

CORPUS CHRISTI.

(II. From the Lesson. Abridged from Bourdaloue.)

"*But let a man prove himself, and so, let him eat of that Bread, and drink of the Chalice.*" (I Cor. XI; 28.)

You all know, my dear brethren, the parable of the great supper. That great supper is, by the con-

sent of all, a symbol of the holy Eucharist. The Church evidently regards it as such, by choosing it for the gospel of the Mass of the Sunday which falls within the octave of Corpus Christi. Well, indeed, may that Divine banquet be called *great.* It is great, by reason of the excellence of the Food which is provided, which is no other than the Body and Blood of our Divine Lord; great, by reason of the number of guests who are invited to that feast; that is, all the faithful, without exception; great, by reason of the dignity and endowments of those who partake of it; for they must all be clad in the wedding garment of sanctifying grace; great, by reason of the majestic hall in which the feast takes place, which is the Church Catholic; great, by reason of its duration, for it will last till the end of the world; great, in its sacramental signification, for it contains the very substance of those good things which were only foreshadowed by the figurative rites of the ancient law. You are all called, my brethren, to this festival; and it is to make this invitation known to you that God sends His servants, the ministers of His Word, to exhort you to come and partake of the feast which has been provided for you.

"Come, eat My Bread and drink the Wine which I have mingled for you." (Prov. IX; 5.) Come to My Sanctuary, says the Divine Wisdom, sit down at My table, and refresh yourselves with My delicious meats. You have a right to partake of them, and it is the one desire of My heart that you should do so. St. Ambrose says: if this is Bread, and daily Bread,

how is it you are satisfied with receiving it once a year? Is it not manifest that the Son of God when He chose to give us His Body under the form of that bread which constitutes our daily nourishment, intended thereby to intimate that His Divine Sacrament should be the daily food of our souls? Unquestionably, therefore, it is our Lord's Will and intention that Christians should make free and frequent use of the holy Communion. But there is a difficulty in the way. The apostle says: 'let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that Bread.' We are hindered from approaching holy Communion oftener, by the necessity of this probation. Now, with regard to this, it is clear that our Lord could not contradict Himself; that in requiring this probation, He could not intend to diminish in the slightest degree the frequency of our reception of this sacrament. Hence, the necessity of this probation imposes on us the obligation, not of abstaining from holy Communion, but of removing the obstacles which may hinder frequent Communion.

After all, what are those obstacles? There is but one: mortal sin. Such is the teaching of the Council of Trent, and it is an article of faith. No doubt, one cannot be too pure and holy to receive so divine a sacrament. When it was distributed to the early Christians, they were reminded of this by the words addressed to them, *Sancta sanctis*, holy things to the holy. Indeed, it would be impossible to exaggerate the holiness and perfection required in the recipient, when we regard the Sacrament itself. But, when

we consider those who receive it, then we recognize that Sacraments were ordained for men, such as they are, with all their infirmities. For this Cause God the Son came down from heaven, and put Himself on a level with ourselves; that we might be encouraged to confide in One Who knows by experience the infirmities of our nature. Again, who are those whom the Master summons to His Supper? "Go out quickly," he says to his servant, "and bring in hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame." (Luke XIV; 21.) They are summoned from the streets and the lanes, from the highways and hedges; nay, they are not only invited, but the servant is ordered to compel them to come.

Since, then, the only obstacle to holy Communion is mortal sin, it follows that if we are not bound to receive it every day, under pain of damnation, we are certainly bound, under the same peril, to be in a fit state to receive it. For every one is under a strict obligation to persevere in God's grace all the days of his life. St. Augustine exhorts the faithful so to live that they may be worthy to receive every day. The frequency of our Communion will be according to the fervour with which the Spirit of God shall inspire us; but we should ever regulate our lives in such a way as to be prepared every day to nourish ourselves with the Bread of Life. A great deal of misconception arises from our not adequately comprehending what it is to be in a state of grace. Engrossed as we are with the material objects that surround us, we do not sufficiently estimate this precious gift of God:

"If thou didst but know the gift of God." (John IV; 10.) To be free from mortal sin, and all attachment to mortal sin—it may or may not be a common state—God knows: but this we know, that, whether common or not, it is a sublime state, surpassing all the possibilities of our nature, to which the power of the Holy Spirit is alone capable of raising us. For what does such a state imply? That we are determined to sacrifice everything, health and wealth, honour and life, rather than entertain a thought, or a desire, or consent to an act which could extinguish the love of God in our hearts. But, if in addition to this exemption from mortal sin and attachment to mortal sin, we further require that the soul should have reached a high degree of perfection, we should run counter to the merciful purpose which our Lord had in instituting this holy Sacrament.

He came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance (Matt. IX; 13); He came not to heal the healthy and robust, but the weak and sickly and languid souls; and it is just this Bread of Life which will bring health and strength and vigour to those who need them. One of the names of this holy sacrament is the Viaticum. It is a heaven-sent provision for our weary pilgrimage through the desert of this life. We may imagine the angel saying to us, as he said to Elias: "Arise, eat, for thou hast yet a great way to go. And he arose and ate, and drank, and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb." (III Kings XIX; 7, 8.) Many of us, too,

my dear brethren, have a great way to go before we reach the Mount of God, the degree of perfection, to which God has called us, and we can only reach it in the strength of that Divine Food which has been sent to help us on the way.

There are, as you know, seven sacraments; each and all of them Divine in their origin, Divine in their purpose, which is to convey sanctifying grace to our souls. But of these seven only one is honoured by the Church with a special festival, and that festival we are keeping now. Why is this Sacrament of Christ's Body so honoured? Because of its supereminent dignity. All the other sacraments are the actions of Christ, as it were, emanating from Him. They are represented by the action of that woman in the gospel who touched the hem of Christ's garment, and virtue went forth from Him and healed her. But the sacrament of the holy Eucharist contains Jesus Christ Himself; so that in receiving It we not only touch the hem of His garment, but receive His sacred Body into our very breast. What fruits of holiness have we not a right to expect from receiving such a Guest! And not only receiving, but being incorporated with Him. "Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?" (Prov. VI; 27.) We receive the virginal Flesh of our Saviour, which extinguishes the fire of concupiscence, and enkindles the fire of Divine charity. We receive the Body which was immolated for sin, and which will destroy the empire of sin so that it shall no longer reign in our mortal bodies. (Rom. VI; 12.)

Such are the sublime effects of this life-giving sacrament, foretold ages ago by the prophet Zachary; "For what is the good thing of Him and what is his beautiful thing but the corn of the elect and Wine springing forth virgins?" (Zach. IX; 17.) But perhaps you will object, that you do not recognize in yourselves or others, these marvelous effects which the holy sacrament is calculated to produce. In answer to this objection, I would observe, that if we do not perceive those effects, it is because we pay such little attention to those things. The effects may be there, though we fail to notice them. Moreover, if we are imperfect, as we are, after frequent communion, what should we have been without it? God alone knows. Again, all the great Saints of the Church of God, all those eminent for their sanctity, have made frequent communion their rule of life; they have attributed to it all their graces, and the virtues which they have acquired. Why, then, should not the holy Communion produce similar effects in others? And is it true that we do not recognize these fruits, when we come to examine those classes of persons who practice frequent Communion? How is it morally possible for an instructed Christian to go on practicing frequent Communion, without being continually urged to purify his heart more and more; to reform and regulate his life; to establish between his Communions and the life he leads, that due proportion which it is within his competency to effect?

No doubt those lynx-eyed critics may detect abundant faults and imperfections in frequent Communicants, whilst they close their eyes to the triumphs of grace which the holy Sacrament has achieved in them. No doubt all of us have, like the prophet Elias, a long journey to go before we arrive at the Mount of Perfection; but those critics should remember the admonition of St. Paul: "He that eateth not let him not judge him that eateth." (Rom. XIV; 3.)

Let us strive, then, my brethren, to appreciate better this Gift of God, the greatest of His benefits. Let us eagerly accept His loving invitation, and prepare ourselves worthily and becomingly for this sumptuous repast. If access to this banquet had been more difficult, perhaps we should have been more eager to approach it. Shall we turn our Lord's liberality and prodigal generosity into a weapon of offence against Himself? (Matt. XX; 15.) Shall our eye be evil, because He is good? No, my brethren, let us show our gratitude for this great boon, by making frequent and fervent use of it. Let us come as often as possible to this sacred banquet, with a holy fear, certainly; but at the same time, with a pious confidence that He Whom we receive, will so strengthen and purify us with His Own Divine Life, that we may at length be worthy to see Him and to possess Him, no longer under a veil, but face to Face in a happy eternity.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*A certain man made a great supper, and invited many.*" (St. Luke XIV; 16.)

Since the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi, dear brethren, the Gospel for this Sunday, which falls within the Octave of that great feast, has acquired a new significance. Nothing more appropriate for the Sunday on which, in so many countries, the public solemnities of the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament are observed, could possibly have been chosen, although of course, as a matter of fact, this Gospel was read on this Sunday for many centuries before the institution of Corpus Christi day.

But our thoughts to-day are irresistibly drawn to the divine banquet, the *Sacrum Convivium*, to which our Blessed Lord invites us day by day.

1. "A certain man made a *great* supper." Our thoughts go back to the Cœnaculum, the Supper Room, where at the Last Supper before He died, Jesus instituted this Sacred Banquet as the undying pledge of His undying love. The Angels in heaven trembled when our divine Lord, taking in His sacred and venerable Hands the unleavened paschal loaf, brake it, and said: "Take, eat, this is my body." They adored a miracle more stupendous than that which God wrought of old, when He said "*Fiat lux*," "Let there be light: and there was light." And the little band of faithful souls who reclined at that humble board, trembled as that mysterious Food was

placed by the King of Heaven into their mouths, and for the first time, man ate the true Bread of Angels, the true Manna that came down from Heaven. "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end," *in finem dilexit eos*, and no greater pledge of love could He give than thus to give Himself.

Let us consider, then, the properties of this divine gift.

2. It is a sacred banquet. Why did He institute it under the form of food? Surely to typify its Spiritual effects. Yet there is a significant difference in the analogy with the food of our bodies. That food is changed into our flesh and blood by the natural processes of digestion. But here on the contrary, it is we who are changed, changed little by little, transformed into that divine Food on which we feed. Yes, we are transformed into Him. Sometimes the body as well as the soul has borne witness to this wonderful change. We read, for instance, of St. Cajetan, the founder of the Theatine Order, that after he had communicated at his Mass, he became all radiant. His body shone with light, his fingers sparkled like diamonds. The flesh had become a transparent envelope, through which the glory of God shone out. This, then, is the effect of this heavenly banquet—it is to transform us more and more into Jesus Christ.

And this is why we are invited to this feast by the divine Host with such insistence. He will take no refusal, because it is for our own sake that He asks us, that He may make us one with Him. "Whoso

eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood," says Jesus Christ, "dwelleth in Me, and I in Him."

Here is the remedy for all our woes, the divine medicine for all our ills. We flag and fail on our road to heaven just for want of nourishment. Our souls are anæmic because we shrink from taking daily draughts of this divine Blood. We turn our backs upon the source of life and immortality, and wonder that we fall victims so easily to the death that lies in wait for us. We are made miserable by some loathsome temptation which is constantly dragging us down into the mud, and yet we avoid the one means by which we could drink in grace and strength to overcome it. We starve in the land of plenty, and turn away empty from our Father's house. More foolish even than the prodigal—we remain in the house, but will seldom share the Feast. We tell ourselves that we are not worthy, as if to stay away when He urges us to come would ever make us more worthy. We heap up excuses for starving our souls, just as we heap up excuses for pampering our bodies. We have so little love, that we leave Love Incarnate alone to mourn our coldness, while we complain that God does not hear our prayers. Should He listen to those who will not listen to Him, or bow down to bless those who care not to accept His invitation?

3. A banquet, too, is a sign of joy, and our Lord, in instituting this Sacrament as a Sacred Feast, wished to show us that it is the source and wellspring of joy. In the world, joyful events are cele-

brated by a banquet, and guests are bidden to rejoice with those who have cause for joy. And in this heavenly Feast the souls of men are inundated with holy joy. This is why devout souls have such an intense longing for Holy Communion, such a burning desire for it.

We read of St. Catharine of Siena, that if her confessor was pleased to deprive her for a few days of this heavenly food, she sank into a languor and a melancholy which soon grew into serious illness. Indeed, one of the chief characteristics of the Saints has ever been their longing for this Sacred Feast. The touching story of the Blessed Imelda, the patron saint of First Communicants, recounts how she, as quite a little girl, had a great longing to make her First Communion. But the priest thought she was too young to approach the altar. And so on the day when her companions made their First Holy Communion, little Imelda knelt at the back of the Church, shedding scalding tears. But lo! as the priest took the Sacred Host in his hand, and held it up before the people, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God, Behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world," the Host slipped from between his fingers and flew like a radiant star over the heads of the other children, rested for a moment in the air over the head of little Imelda, and then entered into her mouth and fell like a snow-flake on her tongue. And so the little one received her first Communion from the hands of the angels, and when they came to look for her, they found she had died of the joy.

4. It is a banquet in which we feed on Christ Himself—*in quo Christus sumitur*—our God is our food. He comes to us with all His graces. One good Communion, as St. Teresa teaches, is enough to make a Saint. We recall the memory of the Passion of our Divine Lord, and clothe ourselves with the merits of Jesus; God looks upon Him in us, and for His sake forgets our sins and blesses us. Our minds and hearts are indeed filled with grace, for we possess the Author and Source of all grace. He is ours and we are His.

But the special grace of Holy Communion is an increase of the life of Jesus Christ in our souls. "He that eateth Me shall live by Me." Our Divine Saviour, little by little, so lives in us, that is it no longer we that live, but Christ living in us.

Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, deigns thus to visit, thus to dwell in us. St. Chrysostom says that the lips of the faithful are reddened with His Blood. We become one flesh with Him, His Blood flows in our veins—no union so perfect as this can be even imagined.

Christianus alter Christus, in this way it becomes true that the Christian is another Christ.

5. And since we who are thus raised to this dignity are one with Christ, so are we one each with the other, for this is the Sacrament of unity, the bond of Christian love. What invitation, then, can be so sweet as this, which the great Householder, the King of Heaven and earth, deigns to extend to us poor

worms of earth? It is His desire, His will, that we should accept it. He bids us come and sit down at His Supper. And yet how cold, how slack we are. It would be worth while to have been born, it has been said, and said most truly; worth while to have to endure all the sorrows of life, and all the trials and temptations of our earthly pilgrimage; yes, and worth while even to run the risk of eternal loss, in order only once to partake of this Banquet, only once in our lives to accept the invitation of our Divine Host. For this Food is so sweet and so heavenly that it transcends and surpasses all things upon this earth, and it makes us partakers of the Divinity even while we are still sojourners upon the earth.

Now we, dear brethren, are invited to come, not once in our lives, but many times; not once a year, but once every day. It is the Daily Bread for which we are taught to pray, the Bread of our souls for which they hunger, and deprived of which they languish and die.

Our Holy Father, Pope Pius X, has set before the Christian world the duty and the privilege of frequent and daily Communion, with an insistence such as has never before been known. He, the Vicar of Christ, speaking in the name and by the authority of Christ, urges us to approach the altar without fear, even every day of our lives. He tells us that the only requisite conditions for a daily communicant, are to be in a state of grace, and to have the desire to become better. We are not to wait until we become worthy,

but to feed on the divine Food which alone can make us pure. And so we have less excuse than Catholics have ever had at any time, for neglecting the invitation of the great King.

"Come, for all is prepared." He says: Come! and shall we dare to stay away? Do not let anyone say, "It is not for me;" it *is* for you, for each one of you, and there is no exception, not one. Come then in crowds to the Feast, and console the Sacred Heart of Him who invites you. Come, and He will fill you with His grace, the graces that He has prepared for you. Do you want to be chaste? Come to the Fountain of purity!

Do you want to be charitable? Come to the Furnace of love!

Do you want to be humble? Come to the mirror of meekness!

"All you that thirst, come to the waters; and you that have no money, make haste, buy and eat. Come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

"Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy you? Hearken diligently to Me, and eat that which is good, and your soul shall be delighted in fatness." (Isaias LV; 1, 2.)

D. B. C.

II SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(II. From the Lesson.)

"In this we have known the charity of God; because He hath laid down His life for us." (I John III; 16.)

We are now keeping the Octave of the Great Solemnity of Corpus Christi; the crowning mystery of the love of the Incarnate Word for those Whom He has redeemed. In the beautiful office of this festival, which was composed by St. Thomas Aquinas, the Church, transported, as it were, with enthusiasm, exclaims: "O sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received: the memory of His Passion is brought to our remembrance; the soul is filled with grace; and a pledge of future glory is given to us!" I think, then, we can not do better than meditate upon this apostrophe, in order that we may come to understand better the excellence of this Divine Banquet; and to derive greater benefit to our souls, from the more devout reception of it, which must necessarily follow a better appreciation of its worth.

1. First, then, in this most holy Sacrament, Christ is received. In all the other Sacraments it is not Christ that is received, but His grace. Christ acts upon the soul through them; so that they are, as it were, the Channels by which His grace is conveyed to the soul. But in the holy Eucharist, we receive, not merely the grace of Christ, but Jesus Christ Himself, whole and entire: His Body and Blood, His Soul and His Divinity. In thus giving Himself wholly to us, how hath He not, with Himself, given us all things? (Rom. VIII; 32.) For all

things are contained in Him Who made all things. Hence, in receiving Him, we receive, with Him, all the treasures of Divine grace: not this or that grace, or such and such a portion of grace, but the very Source and Fountain of all grace. Whatever limitations, therefore, may be found in the grace which we receive from this holy Sacrament, in the effects which it produces, such limitations arise, not from the sacrament itself, whose grace is boundless, but from the capacity of the subject to receive it. For it is clear that a small vessel when let down into an inexhaustible well, will bring up less water than a larger vessel, not because of any deficiency of water in the well, but because of the vessel's limited capacity. Hence, you see how important it is that we should enlarge the capacity of our souls, by a lively faith, by purity of conscience, by fervent piety; so that we may receive abundantly of the superabundant grace which this holy sacrament bestows. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." (Ps. LXXX; 11.)

2. In the next place let us consider that this most holy sacrament is a commemoration of Christ's Passion and Death. Here also we perceive the preeminence of this august sacrament over all the others, inasmuch as it alone bears also the character of a sacrifice. Our Divine Lord instituted this sacrament at His last Supper, immediately before His Passion. Its intimate relation with that Passion and Death is clearly expressed, in the solemn words of consecration which our Lord then pronounced for the first time: "Take ye and eat;" He said, "this is

My Body which shall be delivered for you." (I Cor. 24.) Again, "This is the chalice, the new testament in My Blood which shall be shed for you." (Luke XXII; 20.) "Do this for a commemoration of Me;" (Luke XXII; 19) that is to say, in commemoration of the Body which shall be delivered, and of the Blood which shall be shed for us. Hence, St. Paul reminds us that "as often as we shall eat this Bread, and drink the chalice, we shall show the Death of the Lord, until He come." (I Cor. XI; 26.) Hence, according to the apostle, this sacrifice is a perpetual one, intended to perpetuate the sacrifice of Calvary, until the end of the world, when our Lord shall come again.

In every sacrifice a victim is offered to God by way of propitiation and atonement, which victim must be utterly destroyed, in testimony of God's supreme dominion over all His creatures. Now, as the victim in the holy Mass is our blessed Lord, it may be asked, how can the Mass be a true sacrifice; seeing that the victim cannot be destroyed? For, "Christ, having died once, dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over Him." (Rom. VI; 9.) Nevertheless, the holy Mass is a true sacrifice; and, every time it is offered, we indeed show forth the death of the Lord. For it is one and the same with the sacrifice of Calvary, which, unquestionably, was a true sacrifice, of which, indeed, all other sacrifices were but types and shadows. It is one and the same with that sacrifice, because the Victim offered is the same, and the high priest who offers is the same; the

minister who offers being the visible representative of our Lord, clothed with His Divine Priesthood. Moreover, the action of the Mass is distinctly a sacrificial act, by the separate consecration of the elements of bread and wine, whereby is signified the separation of the Blood from the Body; that is to say, the destruction of the Victim is signified by the form of consecration. Hence, the Mass is a real sacrifice, because the Victim is really present and offered up on the altar; and it is a mystical sacrifice, because the Victim is mystically slain; His death being symbolized by the separate consecration of the elements, although no real separation takes place; the Blood of Christ being present under the form of bread, and the Body of Christ under the form of wine.

3. In the third place, we have to consider how this holy sacrament fills the soul with grace. When our blessed Lord was converting the Samaritan woman, He said to her: "if thou didst but know the gift of God!" (John IV; 10.) We may imagine the same observation addressed to ourselves; if we did but know the gift of God. With what sentiments should we then approach this most holy sacrament! For what is this gift of God but the abiding presence of God in the soul? The soul that is enriched with His gift becomes the temple of God, in which the Three Persons of the adorable Trinity take up their abode; making that soul their sanctuary and dwelling place. Such, indeed, is the glorious privilege which attaches to the worthy reception of any one of the seven sacraments of the New Law. But

how much greater is the privilege when this Gift is imparted to us by the worthy reception of the holy Eucharist! For then we receive Jesus Christ Himself corporeally; and not only His sacred Humanity, but His Divinity also, which is inseparably united to it. Moreover, as the Godhead in Jesus Christ is one and the same in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; in receiving the Divinity of our Lord, we receive, with the Son, the Godhead of the Father also, and of the Holy Ghost. Oh! if we did but know this Gift that we receive! How could it fail to exalt us to the most sublime heights of sanctity and perfection! What incomprehensible treasures of grace are contained in that Divine Gift! What virtues is it not capable of infusing into the soul! What strength to resist temptations; to overcome weakness; to mortify our passions, will it not supply? So that we may apply to this holy sacrament the praise which has been bestowed on the Divine Wisdom: "All good things come to me, together with her; and innumerable riches through her hands * * * For she is an infinite treasure to men; which they that use become the friends of God." (Wisd. VII; 11, 14.) Alas! My brethren, that it should be said that we wantonly squander all this wealth of graces and benedictions by our own supine indifference and carelessness. At least, now, during this solemnity of this most holy sacrament, let us resolve henceforth to receive it with such fervent dispositions, that our soul may truly be filled with the graces which it imparts to those who put no obstacle in the way.

4. Lastly, this holy sacrament is a pledge of future glory. This is but a consequence of what precedes. For glory is the fruition and consequence of grace; whilst grace is the preliminary and preparation for glory. Hence, all the sacraments, as channels of grace, are means and instruments of future glory. But the Holy Eucharist is pre-eminent above them all, in being a pledge and guarantee of that glory. By this holy sacrament we are incorporated with our Lord; we are made one with Him; we must therefore follow Him; we must be *where* He is, for Christ cannot be divided; we must be *as* He is, for with Him is no change or shadow of alteration. (James I; 17.) As He, then, is now in the Glory of the Father, so must we also be, who, through this most holy sacrament, have been made one body with Him. Such, in truth, is the effect of this holy sacrament, according to the words of our Lord, that we are made partakers of the very life which Jesus Christ Himself has, communicated to Him from the Father. (John VI; 58.)

Oh! my brethren, what a glorious destiny! Shall we not, then, strive our utmost to become partakers of this divine life which is thus destined to ripen into a glorious immortality? Now, we receive our Lord under the veil of the sacramental species; then, we shall behold Him as He is; (I Joh. III; 2) no longer under a veil, but face to face. (I Cor. XIII; 12.) Let us then, as often as we receive Our Lord in holy Communion, break out into those amorous sighs of the Psalmist: "Show unto us Thy Face, O Lord,

and we shall be saved." (Ps. LXXIX; 4.) Let us approach this holy sacrament with a true, loving, ardent faith; and it will be to us a pledge that we shall one day, when faith shall be absorbed in sight, enter into that beatific vision which will make us supremely and eternally blessed.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel. Abridged from Bossuet.)

"*There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance.*" (Luke XV; 7.)

If we would form to ourselves some idea of the immeasurable love of the sacred Heart of our Lord, we cannot do better than study this parable of the lost sheep, which the Church has most opportunely selected for this Sunday's gospel. Our Lord therein depicts Himself under the figure of a man who has a flock of one hundred sheep, one of which has gone astray. So grieved is He at the loss of this unhappy member of His flock, that He leaves the ninety-nine sheep, and goes in search of the one that is lost. And when He has found it, so elated is He with joy, that He calls His friends together to rejoice with Him over the recovery of the lost sheep. By the lost sheep, as you evidently see, is signified the sinner who has strayed from the fold of justice and rectitude into the devious paths of sin and iniquity. Miserable, indeed, would be its inevitable fate, were it not for the infinite love and compassion of the

good Shepherd, which prompt Him to go to the rescue of the lost one, which otherwise will certainly fall a prey to the ravenous wolf.

So great, indeed, is His solicitude for the lost sheep, that He seems to have forgotten or overlooked the interests of the ninety-nine who were in the fold. He leaves them to their fate, to go in quest of the wanderer. In this, our Lord does but adapt His parable to the ordinary conditions of human experience. We usually find a much more sensible pleasure in the recovery of our lost possessions, than in their mere conservation. We appreciate the blessing of health better after sickness. The loss of our friends teaches us how necessary they were to our comfort. For custom blunts the edge of feeling, and our power of perception is so weak, that not being able to penetrate into the nature of things in themselves, we only know them by their contrasts. So that this excess of joy which we experience when we find again what we have lost, really arises from our weakness. But do not suppose that from such a cause, arises the joy of the sacred Heart of our Lord at the conversion of the sinners. The motive of that joy is the Glory of His eternal Father, to promote which, the Eternal Word left His throne in heaven, and the company of the countless choirs of angels, in order to seek and to save, in the desert of this world, the sheep that was lost, the fallen race of man.

Let us now consider what the inexhaustible love of the sacred Heart prompts the good Shepherd to

do on behalf of the lost sheep. It moves Him to seek the lost one, to find it, and when found, to carry it home on His Shoulders. For "surely He hath borne our infirmities." (Is. LIII; 4.) This threefold manifestation of the love of the good Shepherd corresponds to the several stages which mark the sinner's progress in the way of prevarication. He strays away, he takes to flight, he becomes exhausted. See, then, how the good Shepherd, whose only aim is the salvation of souls, meets these three crises of the erring soul by three marvellous acts of mercy. He goes in search of the lost sheep, He finds it and arrests its erring flight; He brings it back on His Shoulders, all destitute as it is of power and strength. Let us learn from this simple parable how to estimate the inestimable love of the faithful Shepherd Who has redeemed us all at the cost of His Own life's Blood.

To understand how the sinner who still retains the gift of faith, becomes an alien from the fold of Christ, we must bear in mind that there is a twofold bond of union in the Church; the one, external and visible, in the Sacraments, which are common to all who are of the household of the faith. (Gal. VI; 10.) This bond includes even the wicked, though it profits them nothing so long as they remain such. But there is another bond of union, spiritual and invisible, which unites the just together by charity, which makes them living members of the Body of Christ. Only the just participate in this peace, in this unity, in this Concord. The wicked have no part in it;

they are excommunicated. The Church, it is true, is an ark which includes all manner of animals, clean and unclean; it is a field which produces good grain and worthless weeds. But the Spirit of God Who works in the Church and makes it a living soul, receives into His Breast only the true faithful who live in unity through charity. "One is My dove, My Perfect one." (Cant. VI; 8.) This is why Our Lord represents all sinners as having strayed from the fold which is the Church, and unless they are brought back by the tender solicitude of the good Shepherd, they are doomed to inevitable and eternal misery.

For this is what constitutes hell; this is the meaning of eternal damnation; to be forever separated from God who is our true, our only happiness. Now, the only thing that separates us from God is sin. Hence, you see that the sinner carries hell about with him, because he carries his sin, which plunges him alive into those terrible dungeons where the wicked are tormented. On the other hand, St. Paul, speaking of the faithful who live in God by charity, assures us that their abode is in heaven, and their conversation with the angels. (Phil. III; 20.) In the same way the abode of the wicked, even on this earth is in hell, and their conversation with the demons; so that the sinner finds his hell even in this life. He is engulfed therein, because he has separated himself from the faithful flock which is nourished by the good Shepherd on the pastures of eternal life. You may object that

it cannot be so, for out of hell there is no redemption, whilst the sinner may emerge from his unhappy state. True, but only through the infinite mercy and compassion of the good Shepherd. For, as far as the sinner and his sin are concerned, his misery is irremediable and his doom irrevocable.

How grateful, then, ought the sinner to be when the good Shepherd goes in quest of him, to extricate him from that gulf from which he could never escape by his own efforts! And yet, strange to say, instead of welcoming his deliverer, he flies from him. This, as we have seen, is the second stage of the sinner's downward path. He is utterly cut off from God, and when the good Shepherd approaches, he flies from Him. Let us consider by a familiar example, how much the sinner imperils his salvation thereby. Let us imagine a poor invalid, weak and languishing, whose strength diminishes day by day. It is necessary that he should take nourishment to keep up his strength. He cannot take it. He has a disgust for it. Present him with the daintiest morsel, and his stomach revolts from it. In fact, you may say that his malady really is an aversion to all remedies. Such, indeed, only infinitely more terrible, is the malady of the sinner. He wished, like Adam, to taste that fruit which seemed so fair, he wished to revel in sinful pleasures, and by a just judgment of God, he has lost all relish for eternal goods.

But when the good Shepherd, in His infinite compassion, has overcome this difficulty by compelling

the lost sheep to render itself prisoner under the loving captivity of Divine grace, there still remains a third difficulty; the lost sheep has so exhausted itself in its wanderings, that its strength is utterly spent, it can do no more. What, then, does the good Shepherd do but lift it on His shoulders, and carry it home to the fold? When God made heaven and earth, He found nothing to oppose His Will. But when He converts the sinner, what resistance has not His Mercy to encounter and overcome? Nay, may we not say, that His Mercy has to contend with His Justice in order to snatch from it the victim which it justly claims? How, then, can we sufficiently magnify the goodness of our God and Saviour, Who thus saves us in spite of ourselves! Truly may we say with the apostle, that "God is rich in mercy" (Eph. II; 4); that the riches of His Mercy are infinite and inexhaustible.

But, my dear brethren, do not suppose that the sinner has nothing at all to do in the work of his conversion, that he may leave it all to the loving care of the good Shepherd. No, my brethren, if the angels in heaven rejoice, it is over the sinner who does penance; who does real and true penance; who, in the words of the Baptist, brings forth worthy fruits of penance. For, in this way only, can we satisfy the Justice of God, which must needs manifest itself, as well as His Mercy, in the conversion of the sinner. Strive, then, my dear brethren, especially during these days which are consecrated to the worship of the adorable Heart of our Divine Lord, to satisfy

to the utmost the yearnings of that Sacred Heart, by yielding yourselves up to His loving care and solicitude. Strive to procure this joy to the angels of God by doing adequate penance for your transgressions; that if you have heretofore gone astray from the fold of Divine grace, you may now at length be converted to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (I Pet. II; 25); and by your perseverance, obtain the never-fading crown of glory. Amen. (I Pet. V; 4.)

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson. Abridged from Bossuet.)

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you." (I Pet. V; 7.)

In the words of this Sunday's lesson, St. Peter seeks to strengthen our faith and confidence under the many and trying visitations with which it pleases Divine Providence to chasten us in this life, in order to prepare us for the glory and empire which we shall share with Him in the next. Now, it is a favourite argument with the impious, to point to the miseries and calamities which befall all classes of people in this world, even the good, and especially the good, in order to prove thereby either that there is no God, or that if there is a God, He cannot have any care for us; that there is no Providence which watches over us. I propose, then, my dear brethren, to say a few words on this subject, to show you that this visible universe, and especially the human race,

constitute the Kingdom of God which He rules and governs Himself according to immutable laws; laws which are based upon infinite justice, mercy and goodness, to which, therefore, we must needs submit, and in submission to which, we can alone find our present happiness and future glory. "Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that He may exalt you in the time of visitation." (I Pet. V; 6.)

Let us be convinced of this: that whatever strange confusion, or even disorder or injustice may appear to mingle in the affairs of man, though it seem brought about by the blind caprice of fortune, is, in reality, subject to a preordained order, and is overruled by Divine Providence. An eternal and an immutable plan lies hidden amongst all these events, which seem to develop themselves with such marvellous eccentricity. Then, when we have convinced ourselves of this truth, let us apply it to ourselves, and, recognizing what a mighty Hand guides us, and what infinite wisdom governs us, submit ourselves with all confidence to God's Providence, and strive to render ourselves worthy of its guidance. Such are the two points we have to dwell upon.

With regard, then, to the first point; you may, perhaps, some of you, have occasionally seen a curious toy or puzzle, which consists of certain lines traced upon an uneven surface, apparently without any order or method, and which when presented to the eye, at first exhibits no definite shape or outline; but when regarded from a certain point of view,

these haphazard lines are found to form the perfect outline of a human face, or some other natural object. Now, it seems to me that this toy furnishes a lively image of the world and its vicissitudes, its apparent confusion and disorder, in which nevertheless there is a perfect order and harmony, which we can never discover except from the point of view which faith opens out to us, as in the words of this Sunday's epistle.

The wise man proposed to himself the problem which we are now considering: "I saw under the sun in the place of judgment, wickedness; and in the place of justice, iniquity." (Eccl. III; 16.) How did he solve it? Did he, like our modern philosophers, conclude that there was no God, that all things were the outcome of blind chance and caprice? If so, he would not have been called the wise man, for it is the "fool" who says in his heart: "There is no God." (Ps. XIII; 1.) But, wise man as he was, he concludes thus: that a day would come when all wrongs would be righted; when justice and judgment should prevail, when God should be justified in His words and should overcome when He is judged. (Ps. L; 6.) "And I said in my heart, God shall judge both the just and the wicked, and then shall be the time of everything." (Eccl. III; 17.)

We, in our impatience, wish to measure the counsels of the Omnipotent by the standard of our short-sighted views. Because we are shut up in such narrow bounds of space and time, we suppose that the infinite Being should confine Himself to the same

narrow limits; that He should display at once all that His Mercy has in store for the good, all that His Justice destines for the wicked. In the words of St. Augustine: 'thou lookest to thy few brief days; and thou wishest all things to be fulfilled in that short space, the damnation of all the wicked, and the crowning of all the just.' No, my brethren, the Eternal and the Omnipotent can afford to wait, because He is eternal and Omnipotent. Let us then leave Him to act according to His eternal plan, and unite our will to His by holy submission. As St. Augustine says: 'join thy heart to God's eternity, and thou shalt be eternal with Him.'

All things that happen to men are regarded by them as either good or evil, or a mixture of both. Now the slightest reflection will convince us that there is no such thing as absolute good or absolute evil in this life, for, absolute good can only be the eternal and secure possession of our supreme happiness, which can only be in heaven; whilst absolute evil is the eternal and irremediable separation from that happiness, which can only be in hell. Hence, the day for the apportionment of good and evil has not yet arrived, and will not arrive until the day when the great separation is made between the just and the impious. Meantime, all that happens to us here below which men, from their short-sighted point of view, call good or evil, is neither the one nor the other; or, it is partial good or partial evil, according to its bearings on the decision of the great accounting day; bearings which we cannot hope to comprehend

now, unless we possessed the Omniscience of Him Whose Providence "reacheth from end to end, mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly." (Wisd. III; 1.)

Hence, the inequalities of the present order of things, so far from weakening our faith, only preach, trumpet-tongued, the great truth of the judgment to come. No, my brethren, things are not in their right place yet, nor has the definite settlement been made. The innocent Lazarus suffers still; guilty Dives still quaffs the cup of pleasure. Pleasure and pain seem here to be misplaced; but wait a bit. It will not be so always. The time will come when father Abraham will say to Dives: 'thou hast received good things in thy life; and Lazarus evil things.' Such a state of things is consistent with a world like the present, in which men are to be prepared for another. But it cannot last forever. Therefore, continues Abraham, now that both are in eternity; a new order of things begins, in which pain and pleasure are duly apportioned and that eternally; where guilt finds its just retribution, and virtue its recompense. "Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." (Luke XVI; 19, 25.)

I now pass on to the Second point, which was, as you will remember, the application of this truth to our own circumstances. Whoever, then, is persuaded of this truth, which has been explained to you, is necessarily led to measure all things by their relation to eternity. He wonders at nothing; he fears nothing, which has an end in this life.

To such an one, how vile and contemptible must appear all human grandeur and happiness when regarded from this point of view. The thought of God's final decision strips off the false halo of glory with which the world invests the objects of its worship. It does more than this: it delivers us from all fear and apprehension. What should a Christian fear? One who places his hopes and fears in this world; one who pursues some earthly end, whatever it may be, will find plenty of rivals to counteract his designs; unexpected circumstances will arise to thwart his plans; some spring does not act at the proper time, and the machine stops; his intrigues fail in their results, and his hopes are shattered. But a Christian, who seeks the Substance and not a shadow, whose hopes are not placed in human influence, favour and intrigue, but in the first Cause of all things, in God, in His Will and Providence; such an one finds nothing to oppose him, nothing which disturbs his calculations. Whatever happens to himself or others, he turns to his own profit. For, "to them that love God, all things work together unto good." Everything causes him to enter into himself, and to look to the end; not only the visitations of grace, but also those of justice and vengeance; the fall of this one, and the perseverance of that one; the examples of weakness, as well as those of strength; the patience of God, and His retributive justice.

Let us, then, ponder on these great truths; for they well deserve it. This state of things which we behold

now, is only temporary. It is a period of probation through which all must pass, in order that the just may be tried as in the furnace, that their virtue may come forth free from earthly dross. Let us be assured of this; "that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. VIII; 18.) And, "after you have suffered a little, the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal Glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you: to Him be glory and empire forever and ever. Amen. (I Pet. V; 10, 11.)

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*One of the soldiers, with a spear, opened His Side; and immediately there came out Blood and Water.*" (John XIX; 34.)

On this sacred solemnity, the Church invites us to contemplate that which the apostle calls "the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, is believed in the world, is taken up in glory." (I Tim. III; 16.) It is, indeed, a great mystery which we celebrate this day—the treasures of Love contained in the Sacred Heart of our Lord. In this life, we can never know the height nor the depth, nor the length, nor

the breadth of that Love, for now, "we know in part, and we prophesy in part." (I Cor. XIII; 9.) "We see now through a glass, in a dark manner. But in the next life when we shall see Him as He is, face to face, then shall we know Him even as we are known." (I Cor. XIII; 12.)

But if, in the present state, it is impossible for us to comprehend to the full the love of the Sacred Heart, it is none the less our duty to strive our utmost in the words of the apostle, that "you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, and height and depth, to know also the charity of Christ which surpasseth all knowledge; that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God." (Eph. III; 18, 19.) Hence, the Church has set apart this month of June to the special worship of the Sacred Heart of our Lord. And, surely, the mere mention of that word ought to suffice to excite your devotion. For, what is it that we worship? It is that portion of our Lord's sacred Humanity which has ever been considered as the seat of the affections. That Heart was the Heart of God; and, since it was a real human Heart, and, consequently, had its human affections, it follows, that, in this devotion we celebrate the Love of the God-Man for those whom He came to redeem and save. I mean, not only the love with which God loves all His creatures, but also the human love which He feels, as Man, towards us, His brethren according to the flesh. In this sacred Humanity, the Church has singled out, as Objects of special devotion, the precious Blood, as being the

price of our redemption; and the Sacred Heart, as being the organ of the affections, of the infinite love of Jesus Christ towards us. Count the pulsations of your own heart during one minute, and multiply the number of hours and days and weeks and years; and then reflect that from the moment of our Lord's Incarnation in the womb of His immaculate Mother, to His last sigh upon the cross, every single throb and pulsation of His Sacred Heart expressed the yearnings of a Love which infinitely surpassed the love of all created beings, in all time and through all eternity.

And what is the object of His Love? It is ourselves, my dear brethren. Each one of you here present was distinctly before the Mind of our Divine Lord, and embraced by the affection of His most sacred Heart. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. XXXI; 3.) But what shall we say for ourselves? Can we say that we have returned love for love? Or even that we have concerned ourselves at all about it? The love of the Sacred Heart for us is wonderful, indeed; but, surely, our indifference and coldness are still more wonderful. We are the objects of attachment, of love, such as the world has never seen; on the part, not of an inferior, nor of an equal, nor of any mere creature, however exalted, but of the Heart of God.

The Almighty God, seeing that He was too far removed from us to attract our love, took to Himself a human Heart, in order that He might love us with a human Love; and so compel us, as it were, to love

Him, to unite heart to Heart, and heart's affection to Heart's affection. This is what the prophet Osee means, when he says: "I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love." (Osee XI; 4.) Those cords of Adam, those bands of love, were His own Heartstrings, and yet, we remain as cold and as indifferent as if that sacred Heart had never existed, as if it did not now exist, as if it were not now enthroned in this tabernacle, all consumed with love for you. It was love for us that brought the Son of God down from heaven to live amongst us. "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son," for our sakes. (John III; 16.) It was love for us that compelled the Heart of our Divine Lord to annihilate Itself still more; and to dwell amongst us in the sacrament of His love. "Having loved His Own, who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (John XIII; 1.)

What, my brethren, are you doing to requite such love? When you come once a week to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, is it out of love you come, or from the servile motive of avoiding the consequences of neglecting so grave an obligation? And how many of you make light even of that obligation, and think any pretext sufficient to evade it? Well, you come, and you spend one half hour, or one hour, here; and the rest of the day, of the week, where are your thoughts? Are they ever lifted up to our Lord? Do you ever utter one single ejaculation of love for Jesus, the Lover of souls? Do you ever think of the

long, lonely hours which His Sacred Heart spends here, watching and waiting for some faithful heart to come and visit Him, and converse with Him? Or, are not your thoughts altogether engrossed with worldly affairs; with your farm, your oxen, your merchandise, your family? "Behold, I stand at the gate and knock; if any man shall hear My Voice and open to Me the door, I will come into him, and sup with him, and he with Me." (Apoc. III; 20.)

You complain of the troubles and anxieties and afflictions of this life; and you worry yourselves to death, in consequence; whilst all the time you neglect that sweet haven of refuge for the weary and the disconsolate, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Why was His Side opened with the spear, but that we might enter in, and repose in that loving Heart? "Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (Matt. XI; 28.) If you love, why are you so cold and listless and indifferent, in the presence of the blessed Sacrament? Where are your sighs, and earnest looks, and fervent ejaculations? Again, if you really love our Lord, why do you come so seldom to the Sacrament of His Love? You ask every day for your daily bread; and, day by day, the Bread of Life is distributed at this altar; and yet, you suffer, not days alone, but weeks, nay months, to pass without coming to partake thereof. Our blessed Lord, God as He is, has done all that He can do to testify His Love for us. For, can even Almighty God do more than give us Himself? And yet, we treat Him with cold neglect. "I am come

to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke XII; 49.) Examine, then, your own hearts, and see whether the love of God burns therein. Search your consciences, and see whether the mysteries of the Sacred Heart are not well-nigh a sealed book to you.

Let me, then, in conclusion, exhort you to make some practical resolution. I call upon you, in the Name of Him Who died for you, to do something for the love of Him. I call upon you to draw nearer to Him; and the first step is to be dissatisfied with yourselves. As long as you think that you are doing quite enough for your salvation, you will make no progress. You must see and acknowledge what an infinite distance there is between the Love of the Sacred Heart for you, and your love of God. Then you must begin to shorten that distance by repeated acts of love, (for every little loving ejaculation, coming from the heart, brings us nearer to God); by frequent visits to our Lord in the tabernacle of the altar; and, above all, by frequent and fervent reception of the holy communion. "Can a man hide fire in his bosom; and his garments not burn?" (Prov. VI; 27.) Can we receive often that Furnace of Divine Love, the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and not be enkindled with the flame of love? The presence of that Divine Guest will purify and sanctify us; so that it may be truly said of us: "I have sanctified this house to put My Name there forever; and My Eyes and My Heart shall be there always." (III Kings IX; 3.)

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"*You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.*" (Is. XII; 3.)

This month of June is consecrated, by the piety of the faithful, to the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This feast is of comparatively recent introduction in the Church. But we must guard ourselves from supposing that the devotion with which it is connected has any character of novelty. The reason and form and special Object of the doctrine may be new; being ordained by Divine Providence to meet the new emergencies of the times. But the substance of the devotion is, and must be, as old as the mystery from which it emanates, the mystery of the Word made Flesh. In this sense, our Lord compares His Church to a householder bringing out from his storehouse old things and new. Hence, the devotions of the Church are at the same time old and new. They are old, because they are founded on the ancient deposit of revealed truth; and they are new, because they are, under the guidance of Divine Wisdom, adapted to the ever-varying exigencies of times and circumstances.

This feast, then, was instituted in consequence of a revelation which was granted to a devout nun of the Visitation order, the blessed Margaret Mary. It was upwards of 200 years ago, and happened during the octave of Corpus Christi. Our Lord deigned to

manifest Himself to His handmaiden, as she knelt in adoration before His sacramental presence, and addressed her in these words:—"Behold this Heart which has loved mankind so much; which has spared nothing, even so far as to yield up Its last drop of Blood, in order to testify Its love for them. And in return I receive for the most part nothing but ingratitude, by reason of their disrespect and their sacrilege, and of the coldness and contempt which they show for Me in this sacrament of love. But what I feel still more is, that the hearts of those who are consecrated to Me, treat Me in this way. It is for this reason that I ask that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi be dedicated to a special Feast in honour of My Heart, that you should receive the holy communion on that day, and make reparation for the indignities which that holy sacrament has received during the time it has been exposed on the altars." This desire of our Lord has been fulfilled by the Church; and this Festival is everywhere observed. Only in this country, for obvious reasons, it is permitted to transfer the feast from the Friday to the following Sunday. Let us, then, consider these words of our Divine Lord.

"Behold this Heart!" And so, it was once said by the Baptist: 'Behold the Lamb of God;' and again, by Pilate: 'Behold the Man.' At the voice of John, his disciples rise up and follow our Lord, Him Who taketh away the sin of the world. (John I; 29.) At the word of Pilate, an infuriated mob cries out: 'Crucify Him; crucify Him!' This twofold response,

this double current of love and hatred, makes itself heard and felt, even to this day. Our Lord, from the midst of His tabernacle, cries out: 'Behold this Heart, which has so loved mankind:' and we see the world divide itself into two camps: the one of His faithful worshippers, who turns towards that sacred Heart, and consecrate themselves to Its love and service; the other the Camp of Antichrist, those who openly blaspheme, or practically deny, by their evil lives, the Lord that bought them. 'Behold this Heart.' This Heart which is enthroned above the Seraphim, the object of their rapt adoration. It has come to us; it has traversed the distance which separates heaven from earth. Not satisfied with the ecstatic love of all the angels and saints, it has come to seek for our love. And with what success? What have we done to deserve this? What can the Sacred Heart find in us to make It desirous of our love? Have we ever given it a thought? or uttered a single sigh or aspiration? Have we ever entertained ourselves with the thought of the beauty, the richness, the tenderness, of the love of the Sacred Heart? On the contrary, has not, perhaps, the whole course of our life been such as to keep the Sacred Heart at the greatest possible distance from us? Have we not neglected It, forgotten It, rejected It, pierced It, wounded It, a thousand times by our wilful transgressions? And yet, in spite of all this, the Heart of our Lord is so enamoured of us, His sinful creatures, that It returns, again and again, to try and gain our love. He, the all-beautiful, the all-good, conde-

scends to implore the love of those who are all sin, misery and wretchedness! If we ask, why does this Divine Heart love us so much, we may as well ask why the flower exhales its sweet perfume, why the light shines, why fire burns. It is the law of their nature so to do; and it is the law of Divine Goodness to love. "God is Love." (I John. IV; 8.) "In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us." (I John III; 16.) This love of His compels Him, in spite of our unworthiness, to try and attract our love, that He may communicate to us His graces, make us co-heirs of His Glory, and partakers of His eternal happiness.

"Which has so much loved mankind." Well might our Lord, as it were in astonishment at Himself, say 'so *much.*' What does it not imply? Who shall ever fathom the depths of His love? A love, the length of which is measured by eternity; the breadth of which comprehends all generations, all times, all places; the depth of which reaches even to the abyss of our nothingness; the height of which lifts us up even to the throne of God.

Which has so loved mankind—the whole human race. There is not one exception. From the cradle to the tomb, every child of Adam meets with this love, and this invitation to return love for love at every step in life. From the lowest to the highest, from the holiest to the most impious, through every state and condition of life we find the love of the Sacred Heart, working everywhere ceaselessly for the welfare of souls. I say, we may even go down to the

depths of hell. There is not a soul there who cannot say: 'I have been the object of the infinite love and compassion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and if I have fallen into this abyss of fire, it is only because I refused to follow the sweet invitations of His Love.' That Heart has spared nothing to testify Its love for us. For the proof of this, go to the Crib of Bethlehem, to the house of Nazareth, to the cross of Calvary, to the altar where It is immolated, to the tabernacle where It is enshrined; and see to what depth of humiliation, of annihilation, the very God-head has been brought by Its love for us.

But how, my brethren, shall we endure to hear the reproaches of the Sacred Heart, tender and gentle as they are, against our ingratitude! After so much love shown to mankind, what has been His recompense? It would not be believed if He had not said it Himself; and if the truth of it were not too obvious to our own conscience.

'For reward, I have received for the most part only ingratitude.' Shall we allow ourselves, my brethren, any longer to be the object of this reproach? Shall we not strive henceforth to show our gratitude by returning love for love? And especially, in that way which He has pointed out, and so much desires—by a devout communion on the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

For what does a devout Communion imply? It implies a sincere sorrow for past sin; a firm resolution to avoid sin for the time to come; and a union of heart and soul and mind with our Divine Lord Himself.

Let me, then, beg of you, my dear brethren, to correspond with this tender and loving invitation of our Divine Lord, and to dedicate this month to the special worship of the Sacred Heart; and to the work of reparation for the coldness and indifference, the outrages and the insults which He receives from man, in the sacrament of His love, and of which, perhaps, we may ourselves have been guilty in times past. Let us resolve, by at least one devout Communion during this month, to strengthen the bonds of love which unite us to our dear Lord. Do not say: I have not enough devotion to go to holy Communion. In the winter's cold we do not approach the fire because we are warm, but because we are cold, that we may become warm. Thus also, we receive the holy Communion, not because we are devout, but because we are cold, and have need of fervour, that we may become devout and fervent. "Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?" (Prov. VI; 27.) Can we receive into our breast this Furnace of Divine love, and not be set on fire with the flame of Divine charity; which will consume all our imperfections, and will enkindle within us a flame of love, like that with which the Seraphim burn in the presence of God, of Him of Whom it is said: 'Our God is a consuming Fire.' (Deut. IV; 24.)

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*And His Mother kept all these words in her heart.*" (Luke II; 51.)

On this Sunday, the Church proposes to our veneration and devout contemplation, the most pure heart of our blessed Lady. It is but natural that side by side with the adoration of the Divine Heart of our Lord, there should have grown up also a devotion to the pure heart of her, who gave to Him of her substance, that Heart which we worship with Divine Honour. In all the feasts of the Church, we cannot do better than carefully study the Church's mind and intention as displayed in her sacred liturgy. An important part of that liturgy is the gospel. Now the choice of the gospel, in the case of this particular feast, is not a little suggestive. It is the narrative of the Child Jesus being lost to His parents in Jerusalem, and of His being found by them in the temple on the third day of their search. What do we learn from this? We learn that holy Church, in wishing to furnish us with a true and adequate conception of the heart of Mary, has represented it to us as torn with anguish of the bitterest kind; that she is, in short, the Queen of martyrs and the Mother of sorrows. I propose, then, to consider the incidents of this gospel, in order that we may derive from it that consolation and edification which it is calculated to impart.

Let us, then, try to imagine the grief of Mary and Joseph when they lost the Child Jesus. He was now twelve years old, just growing out of childhood into youth. For twelve years He had been the consolation of their humble home, the light of their eyes, the joy of their hearts; and, all at once, without any warning, that light is extinguished, that joy is turned into anguish. The holy pair are deprived of the visible presence of God upon earth. We must ourselves have been first admitted to the beatific vision and then banished from it in order to form any idea of their grief. It can only be compared to the anguish of our first parents when they were banished from Paradise, and God walked no more with them, after their fatal disobedience.

But this terrible anguish was, ere long, succeeded by abundant consolation. After a long and weary search, they found Him Whom their soul loved; they held Him, like the Spouse in the Canticles, and they would not let Him go. (Cant. III; 4.) Thus it ever is in the trials which God sends His elect; suffering is succeeded by consolation. On the other hand, the turbulent joys of the world are ever succeeded by the most acute pains and griefs; and it is always tribulation and sorrow which remain masters of the field in these stormy combats of the world. Our Lord's reply to His Mother's expostulation is of momentous interest to us, because they are the first words spoken by the Incarnate Wisdom which are recorded in the gospels. Well do they deserve our

devout meditation, for they were written for our instruction. (I Cor. X; II.)

"How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Did you not know that I came down from heaven to accomplish a great work, a work which requires the severance of all ties of home and kindred? Even so, when He had commenced His public mission, and He was once engaged in preaching to the people, it was reported to Him that "His Mother and brethren were outside, wishing to speak to Him. And Jesus answered: 'Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?' And, waving His Hand towards His disciples, He said: 'behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever doth the will of My Father Who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.' " This example of the Word Incarnate teaches us that we also must be prepared, if necessary, to quit home and kindred, in order to be about our Father's business, to do His will and accomplish His work. Still less should we be justified in hindering others from following the vocation they have received from God. Hence, parents who raise obstacles to their children following their vocation to the religious or the ecclesiastical state, should consider this reproach as addressed to themselves. For it was not needed by the Mother of God, who, when she pronounced her "Fiat" at the message of the Angel Gabriel, accepted beforehand and consented to the great sacrifice which she knew she would have to make. She knew that the holy One Who was to be born of her should save His

people from their sins; (Matt. I; 21) she knew, moreover, what was implied in that; and she made a joyful oblation of Him for that purpose when she presented Him in the temple, and when the holy Simeon prophesied that a sword of grief should pierce her heart. Let all parents, then, learn from this, that children are given to them by God, to be reared, not for their own selfish advantage, nor for any worldly views or interests, but simply and solely for God, for the carrying out of His Will; for the accomplishment of His work, whatever that work may be. We know what the Will of God is: "this is the Will of God, your sanctification." (I Thess. IV; 3.) Our sanctification, then, is the one thing necessary; this is our Father's business; it is our business; and if we do this well, we have done enough, even if we do nothing else.

"And they understood not the word which He spake to them." It may appear strange to us that Mary and Joseph should not have understood our Lord's words. But it will appear less strange when we reflect that the mystery of the Word made Flesh was not yet fully unfolded, nor manifested to the world. Our Lord's words contained the expression of that mystery; and, therefore, had to await the development of that mystery, before their meaning could become apparent.

But, my brethren, how often does it happen that we, who have seen the full development of the mystery of atonement, yet do not understand the word which is spoken to us. I do not refer to the doctrines

of faith, with which the understanding has little to do. Faith is an act of the will; the intellect is exercised only so far as submitting it absolutely to the teaching of the Church; and, in a certain sense, the act of faith is more perfect, the less we understand the doctrine believed. But I refer to a far different kind of Divine utterance, which we ought to understand and ponder over in our minds, as Mary pondered over them in her immaculate heart. God speaks to us by His actions, by His Providence, which orders the whole course of events, so that nothing happens without His ordinance and permission. Especially is this the case with the trials and sufferings which befall us in this life. These are the sayings which we often find it hard to understand. When God visits us with some calamity, whether it be by taking from our side one that is near and dear to us, or by depriving us of health or employment, or of honour, or in whatever other way it may please God to visit us, we find it hard to understand this word: and many, unhappily, break down under the trial: who, because they do not, or will not, understand, refuse to submit; and, by their obduracy, convert that which was a visitation of God's Mercy into a visitation of His Vengeance.

The same thing takes place on a large scale, in whole communities. God visits the nations too, with the various scourges whereby the sins of the people are punished and their errors corrected. Happy for them if they understand the word that is spoken to them, and turn to the Lord their God!

But, alas! how rarely is this the case! The more the nations are scourged, the more wicked do they become.

Let us, at least, my brethren, learn wisdom; and when God speaks to us by the dispensations of His Providence, humbly submit and adore, applying to ourselves those words of our Lord to St. Peter: "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." (John XIII; 7.) Strong in the faith and conviction that God disposes all things for the good of His elect; (Rom. VIII; 28) and that, whether we live, or whether we die, we are still the Lord's; (Rom. XIV; 8) we accept with cheerfulness all that comes from His bountiful Hands; and await with patience the time when He shall make clear unto us the wise and merciful dispensation of His Goodness.

And now we come to the closing episode of this gospel: how the Child Jesus returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth, and was subject to them; and how His mother kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. That Jesus, the eternal God, during thirty of tne three and thirty years which He spent on earth, should remain in silent subjection to the authority of Mary and Joseph, is a mystery which must ever fill us with admiration. No wonder that to His blessed Mother, this mystery was a perpetual source of devout meditation. Whilst she pondered over the depths of these abysses of Divine abasement and compassion, well might she say with the prophet: "they are new every morning." (Lam. III; 23.) That devout contemplation was to her a perennial

well-spring of grace, flowing in torrents of celestial favour and benediction which made joyful the City of God. (Ps. XLV; 5.) Let us, my dear brethren, ask of her, as the most precious boon we can demand on this her festival, to obtain for us a similar gift of contemplation: that we may be able to meditate upon the Divine Truths; to keep them in our hearts; to make them efficaciously operative in our lives; that they may be to us also a source of joy and consolation. In this way, we shall realize the truth, that the heart must first be transfixed with the sword of grief, that then, a way may be made for the Divine consolations: as it is written: "according to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul." (Ps. XCIII; 19.) In this way, we shall learn that the only way to heaven is the way of the Cross; that "through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God." (Acts XIV; 21.) And when the troubles and trials of this short life are over, we shall then indeed realize that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. VIII; 18.)

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Lesson.)

"*Put me as a seal upon thy heart.*" (Cant. VIII; 8)

The Church of God, my dear brethren, being the master-piece of His Almighty Hand, must needs be

in harmony with all His other wonderful works; even those of the natural order. Hence it is that, at this genial and joyful season, when all nature is clothed with beauty, when the skies are fair and serene, the earth clad with verdure and bespangled with the myriad tints of flowers, and every grove is vocal with the song of birds; the Church, whose office it is to supernaturalize the life of man on earth, puts before us a supernatural image of joy and life and consolation, in the person of the immaculate Mother of God, whose loveliness immeasurably surpasses all that the vernal earth can produce: who will not confound our hope in her, as the blossoms of spring may be blighted by a treacherous autumn. Now, when our hearts open to the genial influence of the season, that blessed vision stands revealed to us, uttering those consoling words: "As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odour, and my flowers are the fruit of honour and riches. I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth; in me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire me; and be filled with my fruits; for my spirit is sweet above honey, and my inheritance above honey and the honeycomb." (Ecclus. XXIV; 23, 27.) Could there be, my dear brethren, an invitation more sweet and pressing to lift up our thoughts from this mere material loveliness, and fix them on the contemplation of that heavenly beauty which so far surpasses this?

Let us remember that the visible things of this world, their power and beauty, were created by God, not in order that we might rest in them; but that we might learn from them the power and beauty of the invisible things of God. (Wisd. XIII; 3.) And what mirror can we find in which we may better contemplate the majestic attributes of God, than the most pure heart of His immaculate Mother. But this sweet and loving invitation comes in a speical manner to those of you who have this day been privileged to receive Mary's Son into your breasts. You have tasted and seen that the Lord is sweet, (Ps. XXXIII,) that His Spirit is sweet above honey; and His inheritance above honey and the honeycomb. In receiving our Divine Lord, you have entered upon that inheritance of which the holy communion is a pledge and guarantee. May you, then, find in the immaculate Heart of Mary your Mother, those effectual helps which may safe-guard this inheritance for you! She is the Mother of fair love; may you, then, never be separated in life or in death from the love of Him Whom you have this day received. (Rom. VIII; 38, 39.) She is the Mother of fear: may you ever be pierced, through and through, with this holy fear, (Ps. CXVIII; 120) which will keep you far removed from the shadow of mortal sin. She is the mother of knowledge; may she inspire you with that heavenly wisdom which will make you wise unto salvation, that wisdom which is foolishness to this world; for the foolish things of this world hath God chosen to confound the wise. She is the Mother

of holy hope: may she ever sustain you in the trials and sufferings which every one must encounter in the battle of life; sustain you with the sweet and holy hope of that eternal reward, of which you have received the first fruits.

In her is all grace of the way; you have chosen her for your Mother, to dedicate and consecrate yourselves to her, that she may be your guide and example in the narrow and difficult path of salvation. Now, to consecrate means to make holy and sacred; your souls and your bodies, all the faculties of your mind all the members of your body, your whole being is made holy and sacred for ever by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ Whom you have received; and that consecration you have placed under the special care and protection of your immaculate Mother. In the hour of temptation, then, never forget this fact; never allow Satan to regain possession of you; never suffer that soul and that body, which have been thus consecrated to be stained with the pollution of sin.

But it is not merely as an object of contemplation that the Church puts our blessed Lady before us on this festival, but, more especially, as an object of devotion. Devotion to the blessed Virgin is founded on the ineffable relation in which she stands to the Holy Trinity, as true and real Mother of the Incarnate Word. When I have said this, I have said enough to convince every one who really believes in the Incarnation of the Son of God. Again, if you ask me, 'how much am I to love and worship the blessed

Virgin?' My reply shall be equally brief: love and worship her without any bounds or limit. There is nothing startling or exaggerated in this; as you will see, if I make the same reply in other words. Then the answer will be: love and worship her as much as her Son, Jesus Christ, loved and worshipped her. It is clear that every Christian, that is, every disciple of Jesus Christ, is bound to imitate Him, as in other things, so also in the love and veneration which He paid to His blessed Mother; and it is equally clear that no one, whatever may be his gifts and graces, or however long his life, will ever reach the measure of the love and devotion of Jesus Christ for His blessed Mother. Hence, my first reply stands good: love and worship her without any limit.

I would exhort you, then, to renew your consecration to the immaculate heart of Mary. Some of our spiritual duties are repugnant to flesh and blood; and it needs a great effort on our part to correspond with the grace of God urging us to their fulfillment. But in this case, it is otherwise. This devotion appeals to all our best and purest feelings, whilst it sanctifies and elevates them; it touches the tenderest chords of the human heart, and elicits such harmony from them as the angels love in heaven. For to whom shall the mother of a family look, as to her example and support, if not to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Spouse of St. Joseph? To whom shall the maiden look, as to the joy and crown of her virginity, if not to the Virgin-mother of God? To whom shall the poor and labouring man look, for his

consolation, if not to Mary of Nazareth, earning bread for her household by the labour of her hands? To whom shall the sad and afflicted look, if not to the Mother of sorrows, pierced by a seven-edged sword of grief beneath the cross of her Son? (Luke II; 35.) To whom shall we all look, children of Eve, weeping and mourning in this vale of tears, if not to the second Eve, true mother of all the living, (Gen. III; 20) who, in taking upon her the dignity of Mother of God, became thereby the common mother of all mankind, who, through her Son, have been redeemed from sin and hell; and hope, through Him, to be translated into the Kingdom of His love. (Col. I; 13.)

If, hitherto, my brethren, you have been strangers to this sweet and consoling devotion, come now, and defraud not your souls of this great grace. "Come over to me, all ye who desire me, and be filled with my fruits." (Ecclus. XXIV; 26.) Make a resolution now, to consecrate yourselves, henceforth, as devout clients of Mary; and, as such, to approach the holy sacraments more frequently and more devoutly; to say some little prayer, or perform some little practice of devotion every day in her honour; and, especially, to be most punctual in assisting at all the sacred offices of religion which are solemnized in this Church. Resolve, henceforth and forever, to renounce Satan with all his works; to choose Mary for your Mother, your patroness, your guide and your example; that you may ever remain fit and worthy tabernacles in which the Body of our Lord may repose.

And now, my brethren, I commit you all to our Holy Mother's keeping. May she obtain for us all the grace to become her true, loving and dutiful children, as we are brethren of her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus shall we be brought to love one another with charity unfeigned, (II Cor. VI; 6) for His and her sake. Thus shall we be united with one another in the bonds of true charity: of that charity which shall be made perfect in the Kingdom, where Mary reigns as Queen of heaven, happy Mother of all those whom her Divine Son has redeemed and crowned.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"*Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing: but, at Thy word, I will let down the net.*" (Luke V; 5.)

The holy gospel which you have just heard, divides itself naturally into two parts: (1) the preaching of our Lord; and (2) the miracle which He wrought subsequently.

(1) As to the preaching of our blessed Lord, the first thing that strikes our notice is the anxiety of the people to hear the word of God. They pressed upon Him in such numbers that He was obliged to get into a fishing boat, and preach to them from thence. I should like to see the same anxiety on the part of the people of this Congregation, to hear the

word of God. "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." (Matt. IV; 4.) But, perhaps, some may say that if our Lord were to preach to them they would then come to hear Him; but, as it is not our Lord, but only His minister, they do not think it worth their while to come and hear.

Such as these have already been condemned by our Lord in these words: "he that hears you, hears Me; and he that despises you, despises Me." (Luke X; 16.) Again, the apostle, speaking to the Thessalonians, says: "when you had received of ,us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed, the word of God." (I Thess. II; 13.) Hence, there is the same obligation on the part of every one, to hear the word of God from the mouth of His minister, as if it were pronounced by the lips of Christ Himself; and there is the same responsibility on the part of those who neglect to hear it.

There is another mistake which some persons make, who are willing enough to hear the word of God, provided it is uttered in eloquent language, and is full of original thought and interesting matter. Such as these are apt to despise that instruction which God provides for them in their own Church, and to run after the eloquent preachers elsewhere. This, I say, is a great mistake, and it is one which derogates much from the dignity with which the word of God is invested, by whomsoever it is uttered. I do not wish, for a moment, to disparage the gifts of elo-

quence which God has bestowed on some for the edification of the Church; but we ought not to judge the word of God by the language in which it is conveyed. To do so, would be as fallacious as to judge of the dignity of a person by the dress in which he is clothed. When we read the holy gospels, we find that our Lord's sermons are invariably of the simplest and most homely character. There are no bursts of eloquence, nor rounded periods. But some plain truths are uttered and repeated over and over again, in the plainest terms and with the most homely illustrations.

Our Divine Lord, Who is the Source of every good gift, had at His command all the arts of eloquence, and power of persuasion. But he chose, by preference, to use the simple language of the uneducated people Whom He addressed, in order to teach us that the speaker is nothing, and that the word of God is everything, by whomsoever it is spoken. It must needs be so; for there is a diversity of gifts; but the same Spirit Who worketh all in all. (I Cor. XII; 6.) The gift of eloquence is not given to every one; but it is necessary that the people everywhere should be taught, that they should hear the word of God. Hence, so long as the preacher is duly commissioned, whether he be eloquent or not, matters not, as far as concerns the obligation of listening with reverence to the word of God. For in instituting the priesthood, and in giving His priests a commission to preach the gospel to every creature, even to the uttermost parts of the earth, (Mark XVI;

15) our Lord has imposed the obligation on every one of hearing their voice as if it were His own. In this way, does our Divine Lord multiply His presence over all the earth, so that all may hear His Voice. Let us, then, henceforth guard ourselves against any indifference or disrespectful criticism of the Word of God; but, rather, thank God for having provided us so bountifully with the means of hearing it.

There is one part of the narrative which ought not to be passed over in silence; for it is full of meaning. It is this: the boat from which our Lord preached to the people was Simon Peter's. Now, in any ordinary narrative, this might have been only a trifling incident, and, perhaps, quite accidental. But, in the inspired word of God, such cannot be the case: for whatsoever things were written, were written for our learning. (Rom. XV; 4.) As there is a world of meaning in every phrase of holy Scripture, so, especially, is there a deep mystery in this. You know that St. Peter was destined by our Lord to be the rock on which He would build His Church; that he was to hold the keys of the Kingdom of heaven; (Matt. XVI; 18, 19) that he was to be the chief shepherd of the flock of Christ; (John XXI; 15, 17) that he was to sit in the chair of Truth, in order to confirm his brethren in the faith. (Luke XXII; 32.) Bearing all this in mind, one can easily understand why our Lord chose Peter's boat from which to instruct the people. He wished to intimate to us, that the See of Peter should, in after ages, be the chair of

Truth; that from this See should issue the authentic Word of God; that all who wish to hear that word, and to be guided thereby, must listen to the voice of him who, from time to time, steers the bark of Peter.

Such is your faith, and such the faith of all Catholics; you know that, when Peter speaks by the mouth of his successor in the See of Rome, we have but one duty to discharge: namely, to hear, to believe, to obey. You know this, and no words of mine are necessary to confirm this faith. But this incident of today's gospel is one of the many confirmations, that may be found in the gospels, of this great article of faith. Let us learn from it to become, if possible, still more loyal to the chair of Peter; and refuse to listen to any words, however smooth or eloquent or plausible, to hearken to any voice, however persuasive, which has not the warrant and authority of the Vicar of Christ to stamp it as the Word of God.

(2) In the next place, let us consider some circumstances of the miracle which our Lord wrought on this occasion. The first thing, then, which we will here observe, is St. Peter's obedience. Peter and his fellow-labourers had toiled all the night, and had caught nothing. It was now broad daylight, and he was convinced by the experience of the past night, that there were no fish to be caught there. And yet, no sooner had our Lord said the word, than he obeyed without the slightest hesitation, and with the most perfect confidence in our blessed Lord's word. This, my brethren, is a lesson for us, teaching us, as it does, to have less confidence in our own pru-

dence, and more confidence in the Divine assistance. How many are there who labour all the night, and catch nothing, because they trust to the arm of flesh, and to the counsels of their own prudence; whereas, if they had but listened to the inspirations of Divine Grace, they would have filled their nets. Men of the world labour all the night of this life, working in the dark, because they are not illuminated with the light of grace. When the night is past, when death comes, they find they have caught nothing. "They have slept their sleep; and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands." (Ps. LXXV; 5.) So it is with every one who works for this world alone, regardless about the next. What will all their labour profit them, when Christ shall appear to demand an account of their stewardship? How often do we hear of such excuses as these from those who are in the habit of neglecting their religious duties? They cannot find time; they are too much occupied with their work; the cares of this life, and the necessity of providing for their families, hinder them from practicing their duties as they should like. When, my brethren, will men be awakened to a sense of the folly of this conduct? What is this life compared to the next? What is the body compared to the soul? What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? (Matt. XVI; 26.) Have confidence, then, in our Lord. Cast your nets as He bids you, and not as your own prudence would suggest. Obey His holy commandments, and do His holy Will; and you may be sure, that He will, in

reward of your fidelity, provide all that is necessary for soul and body; even as He rewarded St. Peter by the miraculous draught of fishes. For this miracle was recorded, not only to prove our Lord's Divine power, but also for our consolation and encouragement, to teach us to cast all our care upon Him. (I Peter, V; 7.)

If only we had the faith and confidence to do this, we should soon have the same reason to be astonished at His goodness as St. Peter had, who was so amazed thereat, that he cast himself at our Lord's Feet, and said: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" We must, all of us, make the same confession of our own sinfulness and unworthiness. But we need not ask our Lord to depart from us. On the contrary, it is because of our sinfulness and unworthiness, that our Lord mercifully draws near to us to help our weakness, and to render us less unworthy to approach Him. Let us, then, cast ourselves also at His Feet, and cling to them, like the Magdalene, and beg of Him that He would never depart from us: that He would remain with us always, directing us in all our ways: that so our labours may be profitable to our souls, that we may gather to ourselves a great store of merit in this life, and lay up for, ourselves a crown of glory in the next.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Lesson.)

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. VIII; 18.)

Amongst the many mysteries which surrond us in this world, the existence of suffering is not one of the least. Turn whichever way you will, suffering meets you on every side. From the cradle to the grave, the life of man is exposed to all kinds of vicissitudes, of which the greater part are attended with pain and suffering. Whether we look back on our own past existence, or contemplate the present, or look forward to the future, the picture which unfolds itself to our view is to a great extent, chequered with the dark and gloomy tints of sorrow and suffering. And, if we survey the world around us, how great is the mass of human suffering! Go into our great cities, and see those colossal edifices, the hospitals, the asylums, the workhouses, the gaols; what are they but huge receptacles for human suffering? Consider, again, how much of the time and skill and labour of mankind are wholly devoted to the alleviation of suffering. Even then, you will be able to form but an inadequate idea of the amount of suffering in the world. Small, indeed, is the proportion which is known to the general public. The medical man, in his daily rounds; the priest, in his visits to the sick and the destitute, may form some idea, but who shall be able to estimate the sum total of suffer-

ing in the world; and, especially, of the mental anguish and silent grief which remain locked up in the breasts of so many?

Now, what are we to conclude from all this? Are we to conclude, with the would-be philosophers of this so-called enlightened age, that there is either no God at all; or, if there is a God, that He is not a God of Mercy and Goodness, which are the essential attributes of God? No wonder that they who have lost the light of faith, and are groping their way in the darkness of human reason, who look on this life as the term of their existence, and our happiness here as the be-all and end-all of everything; no wonder, I say, that they should come to such a conclusion as this. But we have been taught far otherwise. We examine this question by the light of faith. We believe that there is another life after this, in which the Goodness and Mercy of God shall be made manifest in the sight of all. We look for happiness, not here, but hereafter. Let us, then, consider some of the reasons which render this mystery more intelligible to us; and which, if duly pondered over, will make the burden of suffering weigh less heavily upon us: nay, will even make those sufferings a source of joy and consolation to us.

1. In the first place, then, suffering is the inevitable consequence of sin, of the prevarication of our first parents, and of all the miseries of soul and body which ensued therefrom. "In whatsoever day thou shalt eat of the fruit thereof, thou shalt die the death." That primitive curse descended, not only on the

heads of our first parents, but was transmitted by them to their progeny, and so, passed on to the whole creation. "Cursed is the earth in thy labour." (Gen. III; 17.) Hence, the apostle tells us, in this day's lesson, that "every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even until now." As, then, we are the sad inheritors of a legacy of sin, so must we also be the inheritors of a legacy of suffering. But our consideration must not end here; otherwise, we should be plunged in the gloomy depths of fatalism, and should think ourselves the helpless victims of some malignant Power. Though suffering is not so much the work of God, as the work of man, who by his disobedience has disturbed the harmony of God's creation, yet has Almighty God, in His infinite Wisdom and Goodness, made even suffering subservient to the higher ends of His Divine Providence, and so brought good out of evil. This shall be the Second point for our consideration.

"As by one man, sin entered into this world; and by sin, death; so, by the obedience of One, many shall be made just." Thus far St. Paul. (Rom. V; 12, 19) God has ordained that, through the self same sufferings, which are the consequence of sin, we should obtain redemption from our sin. As death entered by sin; so by death, we are justified from sin. Not, indeed, by our own sufferings and death; but by the sufferings and death of One Who alone, by reason of His infinite merits, could make those sufferings and that death efficacious for that end. Thus were the Divine Attributes satisfied; the Divine Justice,

by the infliction of the proper penalties of sin; and the Divine Mercy, by making those very penalties available for redemption from sin.

This, then, is the meaning of the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation: "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son," (John III; 16) to endure the shame, and suffer the death: that so, our shame and suffering and death might, in union with His, regain for us the life which we had lost. "All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death. If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ." (Rom. VI; 3, 8.) This, then, is the one great Truth, which fully explains the whole mystery: the Life and Death of God made Man. A life of trial, privation and suffering, and a death of unspeakable agony; thereby consecrating suffering and giving it a kind of sacramental efficacy, by His own enduring of it: converting it from a mere penalty, into a means of satisfaction, and a condition of merit. Moreover, how shall we ever estimate the intensity of His suffering? Not only did it far exceed the bitterness of the cup of suffering which falls to the lot of any one; but it surpassed in intensity the combined sufferings of the whole human race.

Let him try to estimate the bitterness of this chalice, who can fathom the mystery contained in the account of Our Lord's Agony in the garden, when His Soul was sorrowful unto death, when He prayed His heavenly Father that this chalice might pass from Him, (Matt. XXVI; 38, 39)

when His agony was such, that a sweat of Blood burst from that prostrate Form, (Luke XXII; 44) and bedewed the ground! From that moment, the chalice which He drank to the dregs, I mean the cup of sorrow, became sanctified and consecrated; so that whosoever should drink of it, received therein a pledge of his union with Him, and of his predestination to life eternal. When the mother of the sons of Zebedee said to our Lord: "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right Hand, and the other on Thy Left, in Thy Kingdom," Jesus answered and said: "You know not what you ask; can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?" (Matt. XX; 21, 22.) We have now, my breth en, advanced some way in our consideration. We have seen that suffering is the inevitable consequence of sin. Further, we have seen that, through the merits of our crucified Saviour, suffering has become a satisfaction and atonement for sin. But this is not all. For the Divine Goodness and Mercy did not stay here; and so we proceed to our third consideration.

3. Divine Providence has ordained that suffering should be the seed from which should spring the glorious harvest of immortality and eternal bliss. This consideration surely ought to furnish us with abundant support and consolation, even under the most trying afflictions: namely, that if we endure them with Christian patience and resignation, they will merit for us, in the next life, a crown of glory. Those, therefore, who are visited with any suffering or affliction, ought, in truth, to give thanks to God,

because they are made more like their Divine Lord and Master, because they are enabled thereby to make some satisfaction for their past sins, and because thereby they earn a title to an eternal reward hereafter. For, "if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Him." (II Tim. II; 12.) Can we complain, if He calls upon us to bear His cross, when He has promised that we shall also share His crown? And what a crown! Hear what the apostle says in this day's lesson. And remember that he, more than any one else, was qualified to speak on this subject. For he himself bears witness that he had suffered and laboured, more than all the other apostles, for the gospel of Jesus Christ; whilst, on the other hand, he had been caught up to the third heaven, and there obtained a glimpse of those unutterable joys which God has prepared for them that love Him. (II Cor. XII; 2, 4.) What, then, does he say? "I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." (I Cor. II; 9.)

Let us, then, my dear brethren, go on patiently suffering, and awaiting the coming of the good time which will not be long delayed, the revelation of the Son of God, the redemption of our body. (Rom. VIII; 23.) Let us suffer patiently; and, not only patiently, but hopefully and cheerfully; for the sake of the great recompense, which is in store for us: so that we may even 'glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not."

(Rom. V; 3, 5.) After all, life is short, eternity long. How brief and light are those sufferings, however protracted and severe they may seem at the time, when compared with the enduring joys of heavenly bliss! When, by God's grace, we shall have given up our souls to Him, and are forever enfolded in the arms of His paternal Love, shall we not look back on the trivial sufferings of our past life, and wonder that we have purchased so great a glory at so cheap a rate? What shall we think then of the sufferings of this short life, when we are safe in that Kingdom, "when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away." (Apoc. XX; 4.)

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel. Abridged from Bourdaloue.)

(Leeds and Middlesborough.)

"When Jesus, therefore, had seen His Mother, and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: 'Woman, behold thy son!' " (John XIX; 26.)

The most consoling festival of our Lady of perpetual Succour naturally suggests to our devout consideration the subject of Devotion to the blessed Virgin, and, especially, that phase of the devotion which consists in invoking her intercession on our

behalf in our manifold necessities. That we may lawfully invoke her, and that she is, in all our necessities, an all-powerful and compassionate advocate and protectress, is a truth on which we cannot entertain the least doubt, if we are faithful children of the Church, and if we are well instructed in the principles of the holy faith. For since the Church has defined, in general, that we may invoke the Saints whom God has removed from this land of exile in which we live, and translated to His kingdom; with how much more reason are we warranted in having recourse, in all the exigencies of this life, to the Queen of Saints and of angels, and in making her the recipient of our vows. What, I ask, is wanting to her, which is calculated to reassure our confidence?

Not only is it lawful to invoke Mary's intercession; it is also our duty to do so. For, if we are obliged to believe what the Church believes, as the rule of our faith, are we not also bound to do what the Church does, as the rule of our action? Consider, then, how many solemn prayers the Church, every day, addresses to the Mother of God, in order to implore her aid. Would it not then be a species of infidelity, to omit to do that which she practices with so much solicitude; not to ask for that which she asks; nor to think of her, from whom, or rather through whom, she asks it? If grace is necessary for us; and if we cannot be ignorant how important certain particular graces are for us in certian circumstances, would it be lawful to neglect one of the surest means of obtaining them?

Now, this means is the intercession of Mary. How often have we been told that God dispenses His gifts through her; that it is through her hands that He communicates them to us? If we are conscious of our own weakness, if we are alarmed at the perils to which we are exposed, ought we not to use every means in order to make ourselves secure? Now, no means is so efficacious, nor so ready, as the advocacy of Mary. It remains, then, to consider in what manner we are to address our prayers to her. For, according to the words of Jesus Christ, not every one who says, 'Lord, Lord,' is worthy of being heard, and of entering the Kingdom of heaven. (Matt. VII; 21.)) On the same principle, we may say that of those who place themselves, or pretend to place themselves, under the protection of the Mother of God, several invoke her in vain: and why? Because they do not invoke her in a Christian spirit; nor with those dispositions calculated to touch her heart, and enlist her sympathies. There are, then, two dangers to be feared; two extremes to be avoided. And, as virtue lies in the mean between two opposite vices; so truth finds itself midway between two opposite errors. That is to say, some count too much upon the protection of Mary; whilst others do not make sufficient account of this resource. The former, according to the beat of their irregular desires, reckon too much on this protection: this is the error of presumptous Christians. The latter, according to their false maxims, restrict it within too limited bounds; this is the error of heretics and unorthodox Catholics,

who presume to criticize the teaching and practice of the universal Church.

With regard to the first error, of presumptous confidence, we must remember that the Providence of God necessarily overrules all things: that Divine Providence has traced out a certain plan for each one of us. Nor is it permitted to us, counting upon the protection of our blessed Lady to disregard that plan, to form another, according to our own ideas; that is to say, according to our reprobate sense and corrupt inclinations. For, if we imagine that, under the protection of Mary, our salvation will be a matter of course; that, when we have performed certain pious practices in her honour, we are exempt from any other obligation towards God; that, clothed in the livery of Mary, we shall be secure against all the dangers of the world, against all temptations, against sudden death, against the decrees of Divine Justice, or the shafts of Divine vengeance; and that, consequently, we have nothing to fear in exposing ourselves to the occasion of sin, in remaining in habits of sin, in living in a state of sin, in putting off our repentance; if this is what we understeand by Mary's protection; depend upon it, God does not so understand it; and we shall find, to our cost, that we have been the victims of a great delusion.

Do not suppose that I wish to deter sinners from having recourse to Mary. God forbid! Why, this is the very scope and object of the festival we celebrate today. That would be the other extreme of error, as fatal as the former. It is true, were we to

say to a sinner that without repentance and by the invocation of Mary alone, he might be reconciled to God and saved, we should make him the victim of a delusion, and of the grossest delusion; for, without repentance, there can be no justification, no salvation. But then, were we to give him to understand that unless he actually renounces his sin, unless he actually breaks off his sinful engagements, unless he is actually touched with sentiments of contrition, it is of no use his invoking Mary's intercession, and that his confidence in her could have no good result; why then we should be deceiving him, and betraying him. For, even if he be not yet penitent, can he not become so, by the intercession of the Mother of God? If he has not the courage to fly from the world and its sinful attachments, can he not ask and obtain that grace, by the intercession of Mary? If his heart is not yet moved with contrition, can he not, through her intercession move Almighty God to grant him the grace which quickens, which enlightens, which strengthens? How can we doubt that this is in the power of the sinner? Still less can we doubt that if he does so, Mary will remain insensible to his supplications, or will fail to procure for him the grace of conversion which he demands.

It is true, again, that were we to say to a sinner that without the love of God, by the mere intervention of Mary, he might arrive at the inheritance of God, we should only deceive him; for without charity no one can be a friend of God; and God will not receive into the number of His elect, and into His Kingdom,

any but His friends. But, on the other hand, were we to give him to understand that without actually having the love of God, he can claim nothing of Mary, and that it is useless for him to try and propitiate her, we should deceive him woefully; and should only add to his misery, by depriving him of his most certain resource. This love of God, which he has not, can he not obtain it eventually; and, to obtain it, can he not, in the language of Holy Writ, have recourse to the Mother of fair love? As, without the actual love of God, the sinner can still believe in God, and from faith pass on to hope, in order to arrive at last at Divine charity; so may the sinner, without the actual love of God, cultivate a sentiment of confidence in Mary which will lead to his obtaining through her intercession, this precious gift of God's love.

Thus, the Magdalene, in the midst of her disorders, was predestined to eternal life. St. Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, even while he persecuted the Church of God was predestined to be a vessel of election; and so thousands of sinners, in the midst of their sins have been predestined. Now, what more efficacious and, indeed, infallible means can we adopt to secure this predestination, than the intercession of Mary? In the midst of the general corruption of the age in which we live, we have overwhelming need of this ever-present and efficacious succour. When so many souls redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ are going astray, and involving themselves in irreparable ruin, let us open wide this door of salvation, and bring home, to as many as we can, the efficaciousness of

Mary's intercession. Let us tell them that to invoke Mary efficaciously, they must invoke her in a Christtian way; that is, they must seek to obtain, through her power with God, the grace to change their life and reform their conduct; to abandon vice, and control their passions; to overcome the flesh, and resist its seductions; to preserve themselves from the snares of the devil, and of the world, which is for them, a thousand times more dangerous than all the powers of darkness; (Col. I; 13) to give themselves to the exercises of religion; to sanctify themselves, and lay up merit for eternal life.

At the same time,let us tell them that however bad their lives may have been, or may be even now, they will receive a gracious audience of Mary, if only they will address her with humble and filial confidence. Far from rejecting them, she will stretch out her arms to receive them. If, then, there be here present any soul tottering on the brink of ruin, any one tepid and languid in the service of God, in the discharge of the duties of his state, any deluded soul, that under the mask of innocence, hides a false conscience, even any open enemy of God, exposed to the Divine vengeance, let them all come with confidence to implore the intercession and protection of Mary, whom God has appointed dispenser of the treasures of His grace and His Mercy; that, through her, they may obtain that mercy and grace in seasonable aid, which will bring them safely to the portals of eternal life. (Hebr. IV; 16.)

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson. Abridged from Bourdaloue.)

"*In me is all grace of the way and of the truth; in me is all hope of life and of virtue.*" (Eccl. XXIV; 25.)

This most consoling festival of our Lady of Perpetual Succour, naturally suggests to our devout consideration the subject of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Now, evidently the most practical form of devotion is that which manifests itself in the faithful imitation of the object worshipped. St. Augustine has well remarked, when speaking of the martyrs and the honours which we render them, that we ought to celebrate their festivals in such a way as to strive at the same time to imitate their constancy. For he says the Saints are not clearly honoured on earth, except by those who strive to follow their example; and the solemnities which the Church has instituted in commemoration of the martyrs ought to be for us so many exhortations to martyrdom. Now to apply these words of St. Augustine to our present subject. On this day, when we celebrate the efficacy of Mary's intercession, we cannot better secure that intercession than by the faithful and constant imitation of her virtues. And first, we may consider what we are to imitate in her; and secondly, why we ought to imitate her. What we have to imitate in her, is her holiness of life; this is the example which is proposed to us.

Why we ought to imitate her is that we may share in her reward; this is the motive of our imitaiton.

I. We should imitate Mary in the fulness of her sanctity, in its perfection, in its perseverance. 1. First, as to the fulness of her sanctity. As St. Ambrose remarks, it is not the case with Mary as with some souls, in whom we see certain virtues to which they restrict themselves, and in which consists their chief merit. Let us study the life of the Mother of God. It is a lesson in all the virtues and for every state of life. By shaping our conduct after her example, we shall learn to be faithful to God, to be just and charitable to our neighbour, to be self-denying, and watchful over ourselves. Young people will learn that which they care so little to know, but which, notwithstanding, it is so necessary for them to know; how to preserve the innocence of their soul, the precious and inestimable treasure of a spotless virginity; how to shun the world, and above all, particular dangerous friendships; how to keep ourselves constantly on guard against the movements of our own heart; to preserve in all things that restraint, that modesty, and that discretion, which are the greatest ornaments of youth.

2. But we must also imitate Mary in the perfection of her sanctity: a sanctity which surpasses all other, save that of God alone. This perfection she attained by faithful correspondence with God's grace. But would it not seem that the more sublime and perfect the Sanctity of Mary is, the less are we able to imitate it? To which I answer, that Jesus Christ

wishes us to imitate Himself, (Matt. XI; 29) God as He is, and, as God, infinitely more holy than Mary: that He wishes us to imitate His heavenly Father; nay, that we should be perfect even as His Father: "be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. V; 48.) It is true we have not received the same graces as the Mother of God; and, consequently, we can never hope to attain the same degree of perfection as the Mother of God. But we can approximate to it, more or less. We can, by setting before our eyes the example of Mary, and the fervour of her piety, awaken ourselves from that torpor which renders us so tepid and negligent in the practice of the most ordinary duties of religion. We shall not arrive at the same degree of perfection as she did; but, by following in her footsteps as closely as possible, we shall obtain a place amongst God's elect.

3. Further, we must imitate Mary in her perseverance, in the immovable constancy of her sanctity. Her sanctity increased from day to day, by continual and fresh accumulations of merit. If we imitate Mary in other respects without imitating her in this, what will it avail us? All the rest, however great, however heroic it may be, can be no service to us; since it is not the beginning but the end which God crowns, as St. Jerome observes. Such, then, is the excellent model which we are bound to place continually before our eyes; the sanctity of Mary, that full and complete sanctity, that sublime and exalted sanctity, that constant and lasting sanctity. This

ought to be the object of our studies, of our meditations, of our endeavours, if we wish to be truly devoted to the Mother of God. But this is just the point, the essential point, in which our devotion breaks down, in which our ardour soon cools. We are not wanting in zeal, when it is a question of publishing her praises, of defending her prerogatives and privileges. But to imitate her, in her detachment from the world, in her love of retirement, in her renunciation of self and of all earthly things, in her blind obedience to the will of God, in her generosity in doing and suffering everything for God, in the mortification of her senses, in her assiduity in prayer, in all that she did to sanctify herself; this is the great difficulty; because all these things are opposed to our natural inclinations.

II. Nevertheless, let us encourage ourselves to undertake this difficult task, by considering the motive we have for doing so; namely, that we may share in the glory which Mary enjoys in heaven. For she is enthroned in heaven, in the enjoyment of supreme and eternal bliss; and this happiness of hers is not for her, like so many other gifts she received, a pure grace, it is a recompence. According to the order of Divine predestination, it was necessary that it should be the fruit of her merits and of her sanctity. Any other title would not have sufficed to give her a right to this blessed inheritance. Hence, may we not justly conclude, that if we wish to enter into a participation of her glory, we must dispose ourselves thereto by a faithful imitation of her life? It is mere coward-

ice on our part, if, terrified by the difficulties of the road on which Mary has preceded us, we despair of reaching the goal where she has arrived. Rather, encouraged by the sight of that glorious reward, we ought to animate ourselves to overcome all the difficulties of the road, and all the obstacles which impede our progress.

Let us then, always have before our eyes these two great objects: Mary on earth, Mary in heaven. If her painful and laborious life on earth alarms our weakness, her glorious life in heaven will reassure us and console us. The more so (and, mark this well, for it is the thought which I wish you to carry away with you), the more so, as the glory with which she is crowned as Queen of heaven, is a guarantee that she will obtain for us the most powerful helps to imitate her laborious life on earth. Let us by way of conclusion, see how this is so.

In point of fact, then, Mary takes her place beside the throne of God, in order that she may plead there on our behalf; that she may promote our interests; that she may thence cause the heavenly treasures to flow upon us in all abundance; in order that she may be ever ready to attend to our prayers; that she may provide for all our necessities; that she may make the throne of glory, on which she reigns, a throne of grace and mercy. This is why devotion to the Blessed Virgin has been so general, so universal in all ages, in the Church of God. This is what has gained her the confidence and veneration of all nations and of all countries throughout the world. This is

why there is not a town nor a village in all Christendom where one may not see evident traces of the devotion of the faithful to the Mother of God. This is what has caused princes and monarchs to place their sceptres and their crowns under her protection; being persuaded that they could not have a more solid and unfailing support than in one whose power with God, according to the expression of St. Ildefonsus, has the character of commanding authority. It is this which has inspired the Church to institute the Festival which we celebrate today, in which we commemorate the all-powerful efficacy of the intercession of the Mother of God on our behalf.

Let it not be a barren commemoration on our part; but let us realize in ourselves the efficacy of this intercession by a faithful initiation of Mary's virtues, in the way which has been pointed out to you. Let us ask her to take us, individually, and the whole congregation to which we belong, under her special maternal protection; that she would help us to extinguish the fires of our passions, and to reduce to submission our rebellious instincts. May she help us to recover the grace of God if, unhappily, we have lost it, and to preserve it inviolate, if we are already happy enough to possess it. May she in time obtain for us the grace to be faithful imitators of her, as she was of Jesus Christ, in order that we may reign with Him and with her through a happy eternity.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*I tell you that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and pharisees, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.*" (Matt. V; 20.)

The gospel of this Sunday furnishes us with a very important lesson. We are told by the eternal Truth itself, that unless our justice exceeds that of the scribes and pharisees, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. The penalty, then, which is threatened for the non-fulfilment of the condition is no other than the loss of heaven and the infliction of eternal misery, for there is no other alternative. It is surely, then, a matter of the most vital consequence to us, that we should consider whether our justice *does* exceed that of the scribes and pharisees. Here let me remark, that by justice our Lord means, not merely giving every man his due (which is the common acceptation of the word), but the exact fulfilment of the whole law of God. The scribes and pharisees were the Doctors of the law, and, therefore, thoroughly versed in its theory and principles. They were, moreover, the rigid observers of the law down to its minutest details; so that it could hardly be objected to them, that they did not practice what they preached. And yet, our Lord said: "the scribes and pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but, according to their works, do ye not."

Such, my brethren, is the standard of perfection proposed to us by our Lord. He selects those who were notorious for their exact observance of the law; and commands us, under pain of eternal reprobation, to exceed them in our observance of the law. Let us, then, examine wherein the scribes and pharisees were deficient, that so we may avoid falling into the same errors, and fulfill the conditions required by our Divine Lord. I. The justice, or, as we should say, the piety of the scribes and pharisees was all external. II. It was trivial and minute. III. It was hypocritical. All these charges are made against them by our Lord in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel; and that in language immeasurably more severe than He was wont to use.

I. Their piety was merely external. "Woe to you, scribes and pharisees, because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish; but within, you are full of rapine and uncleanness. Thou blind pharisee, first make clean the inside of the cup and the dish, that the outside may become clean." Do not these words apply to many so-called Christians who conform only outwardly to the practices of religion, out of custom or human respect; whilst, inwardly, they are full of rapine and uncleanness? How many are there whose one object is to make a respectable appearance in the eyes of the world, whilst they care little or nothing how their consciences appear in the sight of God! I would ask these worldly minded people: "Who will be your judge at the hour of death; God, or the world?" What will it matter to

you then what sort of appearance you or your family may have made to the eyes of the world, when the all-seeing eye of God shall examine and search most thoroughly the inmost recesses of your heart? Is it not a scandal to religion when those who come to assist at mass or other services of the Church, show by their conduct, attitude and dress, that their object is, not to adore God present in the holy mysteries, but to exhibit themselves before others, and to attract the notice of the world.

Again, this superficial religion shows itself in the neglect of the holy sacraments. The Bread of angels is scorned and despised by unworthy man. "The ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the solemn feast. All her gates are broken down; her priests sigh; her virgins are in affliction; and she is oppressed with bitterness." (Lam. I; 4.)

II. The pharisees were also condemned by our Lord, because while practicing the trivial and minute regulations of the law, they neglected its more important precepts. "Woe to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, because you tithe mint and anice and cummin; and have left the weightier things of the law, judgment and mercy and faith. These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel." (Matt. XXIII, 23, 24.) Let those ponderon these words who imagine that God is a kind of creditor, who may be compounded with on their own terms; who think that, as long as they observe

certian pet practices of piety, they may neglect the weightier precepts of the law with impunity. I would ask such as these: Where is your judgment, your mercy and your faith? The judgment, that is to say, of the just mind, which is ever ready to condemn self and to excuse others: the judgment that thinketh no evil of any one. The justice of a Christian is altogether of an opposite kind to that of the world. The world is like that fabled monster of antiquity which devoured its own offspring. And so the world is ever consuming its own children's reputation by its uncharitable speeches and judgments. How much of the conversation of the world is made up of calumny, detraction, backbiting, injurious and ungenerous surmises, and suspicions!

Again, where is your mercy? As members of Jesus Christ, you are bound to love all as fellow-members of the same Body, as created by the same God, and redeemed by the same Blood of Jesus Christ, as partakers of the same Spiritual gifts, and inheritors of the same heavenly Kingdom. If this be so, whence that hatred which one bears towards another? Whence that assumption of superiority of one over another? Whence that rancour, envy, jealousy and spite? Whence that secret, ill-disguised pleasure at others' misfortunes? Heaven was created by God for the souls that love. No hater of his brother can ever enter there. You, therefore, who come to "offer your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother hath anything against you, go first to be reconciled to your

brother; and then coming offer your gift." (Matt V; 23, 24.)

Where, again, is your faith? One might well ask this question. When one considers the apathy, the indifference, the negligence of so many Christians, one might well ask: and do these people really believe that they are assisting at the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ; that they are receiving His blessing; and, not only His blessing, but receiving Himself into their breasts? Where is the faith of those who have cut themselves off from the communion of the faithful, by not complying with the Easter obligations? Where is the faith of those who think they have done enough, by receiving holy Communion once a year, and deprive their soul of its supersubstantial food during the remainder of the year? Where is the faith of those who may assist indeed at a mass of obligation to avoid mortal sin; but spend the time in listless indolence, in idle distractions; whilst the rest of the day, and the week is wholly spent in worldly cares and pursuits, without a thought of God or their soul's eternal interests? "Unless your justice exceed the justice of the scribes and pharisees, you shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven." The measure of the justice which is required of us is expressed by our Lord in that precept: "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself: this do, and thou shalt live." (Luke X; 27, 28.)

We are not called on to make any great sacrifice or heroic efforts: all that the gospel exhorts us to do is to be in earnest, and to act as becomes those who are conscious that their eternal salvation depends on their earnestness. We have considered the standard of piety which our Lord has proposed to us, together with His solemn declaration that they who do not reach that standard, must certainly be lost. We have seen that that standard of holiness requires that our virtue should be real, not pretended; that it should be deeply rooted in the heart, and not a mere external show of piety which may deceive men, but cannot deceive God: that it should rule all our actions and our whole being, and not be brought out with our Sunday clothes once a week. Is this too much to expect from creatures endowed with reason and intelligence as we are? Men can be earnest enough about their temporal affairs and business; and yet what can equal in importance the question of our eternal salvation? Any temporal misfortune may be repaired or if not repaired, may be endured. But the loss of our immortal soul can never be repaired; and how shall it be endured? "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Is. XXXIII; 14.) Since the dread alternative of being either saved or lost eternally is awaiting each one of us in the future, let us arouse ourselves from our indifference and negligence, and labour more earnestly to make our calling and election sure, by a true, earnest, solid and heartfelt piety; (I Pet. II; 10) by a faithful

observance of the weighty precepts of the law, not content with its minor observances: these things, indeed, we ought to do, but not leave those undone; by the diligent exercise of judgment, of mercy and of faith: of the judgment that thinketh no evil, that so we may escape God's judgment ourselves: "judge not, that you may not be judged:" (Matt. VII; 1) of mercy, that we may inherit the blessing which has been pronounced on the merciful: "blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy:" (Matt. V; 7) of faith, that we may overcome the world; for, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." (I Joh. V; 4.) And, in overcoming the world, we shall conquer for ourselves the Kingdom of heaven, and receive the promise of everlasting happiness. "By faith, the saints have conquered Kingdoms, wrought justice, and obtained the promises." (Hebr. XI; 33.)

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"*Sanctify the Lord Christ in your heart.*" (I Pet. III; 15.)

All our duties have been summed up by our Lord in that commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God:" (Matt. XXII; 37) "the love of God is the fulfilment of the law." (Rom. XIII; 10.) There is no possibility of salvation, except through Divine charity; "he that loveth not abideth in death." (I

Joh. III; 14.) Those who have attained to the love of God are in the way of eternal life; and nothing on earth, or in hell, shall be able to snatch that life from them as long as they abide in charity. The measure of our charity, or love of God, is the measure of our perfection. The very happiness of heaven consists in the completion and consummation of Divine charity within us. There are three virtues which unite the Soul to God: faith, hope and charity. And the greatest of these is Charity. (I Cor. XIII; 13.) For faith and hope shall be superseded; but charity shall remain, and remain forever. The one object of our lives, then, must be to seek to obtain this love of God; and when obtained, to preserve and foster and increase it in our souls until we arrive at the consummation of charity in eternal union with God.

What then are the means at our disposal for attaining this object? For it is not to be supposed that God should have imposed on us this great Commandment, without giving us the means of fulfilling it. He has, indeed, done so, and furnished us with ample and abundant means of fostering His love in our hearts; chiefly, in that stupendous mystery of Divine love, the sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood, from which as from an inexhaustible fountain, we may inebriate our souls with the torrents of Divine charity. Love is founded on resemblance, and the sympathy which unites those who love is the result of conformity of inclination. It was to bring about this resemblance that the blessed sacrament was instituted: to create a resemblance and a

conformity between the recipient and the Received; and thus to make easy the fulfilment of the duty which we owe of loving Him Who thus gives Himself to us. When God created man and imposed on him the duty of obedience, He made the fulfilment of that duty easy by creating him to His Own Image. So, in heaven Divine Charity will receive its final consummation, because thus we shall be transformed, is it were, with God. We shall become like to Him, being made partakers of the Divine Nature. (II Peter I; 4.)

In order, then, to render more perfect this Divine resemblance, in which our nature was first created, but which we have in great part lost by sin, and in order the better to prepare us for the final and eternal transformation which awaits us in heaven, Jesus Christ has instituted this holy sacrament, that, by being incorporated with Him, we may become like to Him. By this sacrament, our blessed Lord has destroyed the evil work of the serpent who first marred the image of God in our first parents. The devil said to them: "eat this fruit; and you shall be as gods." (Gen. III; 5.) They were deceived by the specious appearance of the fruit, and ate of it in defiance of God's injunction; and they died the death. Jesus Christ says to us: "eat My Flesh, and drink My Blood; and you shall become as gods; for you shall become partakers of My Nature, (John VI; 58) of that Divine Nature which is inseparably united to His Flesh and Blood. And we, not looking to the outward appearance of that which is

seen by the eye of sense, believe the word which is spoken to us; and, in that faith, we nourish our souls with the Bread of Life. Our Lord calls His sacramental Body the Bread of Life, and He clothes It under the form of bread, to signify Its sacramental effect, which is to nourish the soul unto eternal life; just as bread nourishes the body and preserves its natural life.

Again, the manner in which bread nourishes the body is this: God has so formed this body of ours that it is able to digest the food which it receives, to assimilate it and convert it into its own substance; so that that which was before a foreign and inanimate substance becomes a part of our own being; it is transformed into ourselves. In the same way the holy Eucharist is received by us; and an assimilation and union takes place between the recipient and the Received; only with this important difference, that, whereas the human body being the more noble, changes the ignoble substance of bread into itself, the blessed Eucharist, which is the Food, being the more noble substance, is not changed into our nature, but rather transforms us into Itself; for this, and no less than this, was the end of its institution.

Let us next consider how this transformation and consequent resemblance takes place after the reception of the holy Eucharist. There are three principal kinds of resemblance: 1, in person; 2, in character; 3, in action. (1) The devout reception of the holy Eucharist causes a personal resemblance between the recipient and our blessed Lord, both as to soul and

body; inasmuch as we receive both the Soul and Body of our Lord which, being united to Our Soul and body, must needs make us like unto Him; but in a Sacramental way. As our Lord's Body is veiled under the sacramental species, so, the outward likeness which it communicates to the recipient, is veiled. But the angels of God see through that veil, even as they see, whilst they adore, the Body of Christ in the holy sacrament. So they behold and reverence in every devout communicant the resemblance, more or less perfect according to his dispositions, to their Lord and Master. But that veil shall be removed when Jesus shall show Himself to us, no longer under the sacramental species, but face to face; then, indeed, we shall be like to Him, even as to outward form and appearance; then shall we reach the "measure of the age of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. IV; 13.)

(2.) The devout reception of the holy Eucharist also creates in the recipient a resemblance of character to our blessed Lord. We know by sad experience the weakness of our nature, its propensity to sin. By nature we are proud, covetous, sensual, irritable, self-indulgent, spiteful, indolent. Now, one of the chief effects of holy Communion in the soul of the recipient is to destroy these vicious principles, and to implant instead the virtues with which the sinless Nature of our Lord was endowed: His humility, His poverty, His purity, His meekness, His Self-denial, His charity, His zeal. What is it that has made the saints lead such lives of heroic sanctity?

What is it that has overcome in them the corruption of our depraved nature, and substituted for it the beauty and sweetnes of Christ-like holiness; what is it but the devout reception of the holy Communion? This it is which has so transformed them that they could say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. II; 20.) For the life of Christ was manifested in them. (II Cor. IV; 10.) And that which the holy Eucharist did for them, it is able to do for us; if we did not put obstacles in the way. We receive the same sacrament; and It has the same power and efficacy in us as in the saints. Why, then, does it not produce the same fruits?

The amiable perfections of Jesus Christ are united in holy Communion with the infirmity of our nature; and one of two things must result. Either the purity and humility and patience of Jesus Christ must overcome our pride and passion and self-love or, if we still cling to those vices, Jesus Christ must be driven from our hearts, in which He seeks to abide. If we are not then better than we are for our Communions the fault is not in the Sacrament but in ourselves; in our own want of earnestness, in our half-heartedness and lack of generosity in dealing with God. God forbid that I should say anything to discourage you from frequent Communion; no, bad as we are, in spite of holy Communion, what should we have been without It? What, then, I would exhort you to do is this; not to rest satisfied with yourselves, but to compare your actual dispositions with that standard to which you ought to conform, Jesus Christ

Himself, and see how far you fall short of that standard; to excite yourselves to profit, more than you have done hitherto by the life-giving sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood. I would, in short, exhort you to fulfil the apostlic injunction: "to sanctify the Lord Christ in your heart."

(3.) The third point of resemblance, that of action, will follow necessarily from the second. For a man's actions cannot be at variance with his character. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit." (Matt. VII; 18.) If Jesus Christ be engrafted in our nature that nature will produce the good fruits of Christian virtues. When we speak or think, or act, it will be Christ who thinks and speaks and acts within us, and our whole life and being will be sanctified.

Such, my brethren, are the effects which the holy Communion ought to produce in us if we would but allow the Sacramental grace to work its legitimate effect upon us. It would speedily change us altogether into new beings. I do not say it would change us all at once. For the Sacraments do not, ordinarily, operate in this way. But the sweetness and force of Divine charity would gradually correct the depravity of our nature and overcome the vehemence of our passions, so that we should soon become true Christians; we should sanctify the Lord Christ in our hearts, and we should prepare ourselves for that final transformation, according to which we shall be eter-

nally one with Him even as He and the Father are One. (John XVII; 22.)

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*I have compassion on the multitude.*" (Mark VIII; 2.)

In the gospel of this Sunday, my dear brethren, we have proposed to us an instructive lesson on the confidence which we ought to have in the good Providence of God. It is of the greatest importance that we should sometimes consider this lesson, for we are too apt to forget that God is our Father, although we repeat the words so often, "Our Father Who art in heaven." (Matt. VI; 9.) We forget that He bears towards us a truly paternal love, that in fact, He is, in the highest sense, our only true Father. For our Lord has said: "Call none your father on earth, one is your Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. XXIII; 9.) Again, the apostle tells us that of God "all paternity is named in heaven and on earth." (Eph. III; 15) meaning thereby, that the love and care which our earthly parents bear for us is but a shadow of that which is borne towards us by Him whom we daily address as "Our Father Who art in heaven."

It does seem strange, indeed, that we should forget this comforting and ennobling thought, of the relationship that subsists between ourselves and God that "we should be called and should be the sons of God." (I Joh. III; 1.) Is it not a spectacle

to make angels weep if they could weep and to cry out: "O ye sons of men, how long will you love vanity and seek after lying!" (Ps. IV; 3.) We have forgotten the Lord that made us, His loving kindness and paternal Providence (Deut. XXXII; 18); and we cleave to the world which is but a hard and cruel taskmaster. There are but two spirits which we can follow, the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world—the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry "Abba, Father" (Rom. VIII; 15); and the spirit of wickedness wherein is the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (I Joh. II; 16); the spirit we embraced at the baptismal font when we received the light of faith and the white robe of innocence, and the spirit we renounced at the same font, the spirit of Satan, with all his works and pomps. Let us, my dear brethren, examine our conscience and see to which spirit we belong and make good resolutions to amend whatever we find to be amiss.

In the narrative of this stupendous miracle which our blessed Lord wrought, we find most effectual motives for casting all our care upon God, (I Peter V; 7), and for renouncing the vain attempt to find our satisfaction in this world. (1) First, then, God knows all things; He knows all our wants and necessities. There is not a single person here present who is not as distinctly before the Mind of our Lord as though he were the only living being to care for. When Sion cried: "The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me," He replied: "Can a

woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee; behold, I have graven thee in My Hands." (Is. XLIX; 15, 16.) Yes, He has indeed graven us on His Hands in characters of blood; those pierced Hands fast nailed to the cross prove to us the love He bears to each one of us. He knows our wants, therefore, and He knows moreover that many of us "have come from afar off and are likely to faint by the way," unless they are refreshed.

Many have come from the far-off country of sin and indifference where, with the prodigal, they have wasted their substance in dissipation. But they felt the misery to which they were reduced in being so far away from their father's house, Our Lord knows all this, and His charity urges them to return and be reconciled to Him. Many too, have come from the far-off regions of error and unbelief. Tossed about by every wind of doctrine they felt the insecurity of their position, and the desire to repose in the tranquil haven of God's infallible Church. Our Lord knows all this and pursues them with the sweet invitations of His Grace until they are brought into the one fold, until they are converted to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

(2.) In the next place, consider not only that our Lord knows our wants, but also the infinite Goodness which prompts Him to relieve us. "I have compassion on the multitude." It is sufficient for

our Lord to know our wants, and immediately His Heart is moved with compassion to come to our assistance. That Sacred Heart is the Heart of God, and yet it is a human heart, has human affection and emotions. Those affections, my dear brethren, are fixed on us, on each one of us. He would even have His Side pierced with a lance so that we might have access to that Sacred Heart; that there might be no wall of separation between us and Himself. He has loved us with an everlasting love. (Jer. XXXI; 3.) Jesus Christ, having loved His Own who were in the world, would love them even to the end. (Joh. XIII; 1.) Hence, when He was going out of this world to His Father, He instituted the adorable sacrament of His love, the blessed Eucharist, to perpetuate His presence amongst us. He has built Himself a tabernacle of love in which He abides forever, to attract us from following this world, to draw us to Himself, to establish with us a bond of perpetual Communion. There He remains, watching and waiting for some faithful soul to come and lighten the hours of His captivity by their aspirations of love and devotion. Is not "one day in the courts of the Lord better than thousands?" (Ps. LXXXIII; 11.) When you have served the world all the days of your life what will the world do for you in the end? Can it help you one single step towards the possession of eternal bliss? Is not one fervent act of love worth infinitely more than all the goods which this world can boast of?

(3.) In the third place, my dear brethren, we have

a certain assurance, not only of God's Omniscience in knowing our wants, and of His infinite compassion which moves Him to relieve them, but also of His Omnipotence by which He is able to do so. Of this the miracle of this Sunday's gospel furnishes a convincing proof. By His omnipotent word alone He multiplied seven loaves and a few small fishes so as to provide abundance for four thousand persons, and there remained seven baskets of fragments. God alone could do this, and God alone is able to work the same miracle for us if it be necessary. And yet how many are there who neglect their daily prayer, the religious observance of the Lord's day, the reception of the sacraments, the religious instruction of their children! And what is the excuse they allege for their neglect? It is because they are so much occupied with the business and cares of life, with making provision for their families, that they have not time nor opportunity to attend to their Spiritual duties. What blindness and infatuation! To gain a living they abandon the Author of life. To obtain the things of this world they neglect the source of all good and the giver of every good gift. Well might our Lord cry out: "O ye of little faith." If God provides for the birds of the air, and the flowers of the field, how much more will He provide for us who are His children?" (Matt. VI; 25, 28.) Be not solicitous, therefore, for corporal food, but rather for the food of the soul, the grace of God, and especially for that sacramental food which is His Flesh, for the life of the world.

(Joh. VI; 52.) Be not solicitous for bodily clothing wherein is pride and vanity and the incentive to manifold sins, but rather for the spiritual robe of grace, of truth, of justice, of purity and all the virtues which are the proper adornment of every Christian. Resolve, then, to live not for this world, but for God; to use this world as though you used it not, for there is nothing but misery and bitter remorse attendant upon the service of this world. (I Cor. VII; 31.)

We have, my dear brethren, endeavored to draw from this gospel some reflections on the great motives we have for confidence in God's Providence: motives which are based on the finite knowledge He has of our wants, His infinite love and compassion which prompt Him to relieve them, and His Almighty Power to do whatever He pleases on our behalf. The practical conclusion of these considerations ought to be a resolution to live as if we had a lively faith in this Providence, that we should never allow worldly considerations to stand in the way of the fulfilment of our religious duties, that we should in all things seek first the welfare of our soul before that of the body. But especially there is one great means of sanctification, to which this miracle seems to bear special reference; I mean the blessed Sacrament. For in the multiplication of the loaves to feed the hungry in the desert, we have a type of the miracle which is every day wrought on the altars of the Church, whereby our Lord multiplies, not that bread which nourishes the body, but His Own

blessed Body to nourish our souls. Our Divine Lord has done all that He could do, to show His love for us. God as He is, He could do no more than give us Himself, His Own precious Body and Blood to be united to ours, that we might be one with Him, one Heart, one Soul, one Body.

And what is the return we make to Him? It is, alas! to treat Him with contempt and indifference. Try then, my dear brethren, to make Him some return of love, to respond to His loving invitation and not to make such excuses as these: "I have bought a farm, or a yoke of oxen, or I have married a wife, and therefore, I cannot come." (Luke XIV; 18, 20.) Come now ere it be too late. The bridegroom may even now be at the door, and if you are not prepared now to enter in, the door of the heavenly nuptials will be shut against you for all eternity. Now whilst there is time, throw off all delay and indifference and hasten to secure your eternal salvation, by participating in the life-giving grace of the holy sacraments. "Behold, I stand at the gate and knock; if any man shall hear my voice and open to Me the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me." (Apoc. III; 20.)

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ." (Rom. VI; 8.)

The subject on which I wish to address a few words to you on this occasion, my dear brethren, is

that of mortification. Mortification means putting to death. The apostle St. Paul clearly teaches us, in the lesson which you have heard read, that mortifiacation is a duty, and an essential duty of every Christian, so much so, that it is a necessary condition of our future resurrection to life eternal. "Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ." Please observe that he says: "if we be dead with Christ;" as much as to say, that there is no hope of our being planted in the likeness of His resurrection unless we have first been planted in the likeness of His death.

But before we go any farther, it would be as well to correct a mistake that might arise in the minds of some as to the meaning of those words. It might be thought that the death spoken of here is the natural death of the body; that there can be no resurrection except after the death of the body. This is perfectly true, but it cannot be the apostle's meaning; neither would it have been worth his while to waste his words in arguing such a self-evident truth. It cannot, I say, be the apostle's meaning. For his argument is, a glorious resurrection, in the likeness of that of Christ, is promised to all who die in the likeness of His death. Now, if he had meant merely the natural death of the body, the proposition would not have been true. For all must die, the bad as well as the good; and most assuredly the wicked shall not rise to a glorious resurrection, but to the resurrection unto judgment, which is the beginning of eternal death. He must, therefore, mean some

other kind of death. Let us consider what kind of death he meant.

He means the putting to death of the body, whilst it still retains its natural life intact; in other words, the crucifying of the flesh with its vices and concupiscence (Gal. V; 24); he means the destruction of the body of sin in our members. It is our corrupt nature, vitiated by original sin, with all its evil and irregular inclinations and passions which must be put to death. This is the kind of death the apostle means; and this death all must undergo, who hope to obtain a blessed resurrection. Now, this is a truth, and a most important truth. It is, no doubt, a startling truth to all easy-going Christians, who lead lives of self-indulgence and strive to make the most they can of this world and its enjoyments.

There are manifestly two ways of treating this body of ours. We may treat it as a friend to be indulged, whose every whim and humour and desire are to be gratified. Or we may treat it as an enemy and rebellious slave, to be punished, curbed and thwarted in every possible way. Now, it depends on which of these two views we take; upon which of these two principles we act, whether we shall rise to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection unto judgment; whether we shall appear among the elect or the reprobate. Surely then, my brethren, this is a most important matter, and worthy of our most serious consideration, seeing that so much depends upon it. It is not a matter in which we are free to choose, for we have all been committed to the

necessity of this mortification by our baptism, as the apostle takes care to remind us, when he says: "All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death."

Hence, when we speak of the necessity of mortification, do not suppose that it means something which is necessary for those only who are called to be saints, for priests and monks and nuns and those who profess the religious life. No, it is absolutely necessary for every baptized person, for every Christian. But then, this mortification of which the apostle speaks, does not necessarily imply great austerities, and discipline unto blood; such mortifications are, indeed, great helps towards the sanctification of the soul; but all are not called to practice them. But the mortification which every Christian is bound to practice, consists in the putting to death of all those evil habits and propensities which are the spontaneous fruit of this body of sin which is conceived in sin. I need not particularize what are these fruits of concupiscence. For our own experience is enough to make us sigh, with St. Paul, to be delivered from the body of this death. (Rom. VII; 24.)

They are summed up in that sad catalogue of what are called the seven deadly sins: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. For, every sin we commit may be traced to one or other of these sources. There are so many fortresses of sin, deeply founded in our corrupt nature which make war upon the grace of God in the Soul. These

strongholds must be rased to the ground and their garrisons starved out. These are the evil habits and propensities which must be put to death within us; and this is what the apostle means when he speaks of crucifying the old man; that is, our old, unregenerate, corrupt nature (Col. III; 9); for flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. (I Cor. XV; 50.) Whatever, then, is born of flesh and blood within us must be utterly destroyed, and our whole nature must be spiritualized; in order that it may be fitted for the resurrection unto life. Now this putting to death of our corrupt nature is by no means an easy task. Nor can it be. There is nothing which dies easily. Everything has an instinctive repugnance to death, and nothing more so than our vices and concupiscences.

Hence, I said, that this lesson, which the apostle teaches us, is a startling one for all easy-going Christians. It is beyond all question, that no child of Adam (except the Blessed Virgin) is exempt from this common corruption. From which it follows that no one is, or can be, exempt from the duty of practicing mortification. We, all of us, have these seeds of death implanted in our nature. So that if any one makes light of this matter, and is not solicitous to uproot these evil habits; if there is anyone, who is not conscious of doing violence to himself and his own inclinations, such a one is certainly under the bondage of sin, and shall have no part in the glorious resurrection. For "they who sow in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption."

(Gal. VI; 8.) There is no such thing as an easy road to heaven. There is no such thing as peace and harmony with our corrupt nature, for those at least, who would enjoy the peace of a good conscience. If we are at peace with our corrupt nature, if we are not conscious of any struggle with ourselves, if we are ever seeking to pamper and indulge our own inclinations, even though we may not wish to commit a mortal sin, nevertheless, we remain in those conditions under the dominion of sin.

For, we must serve some master, either the spirit or the flesh. We may think we are doing our own will, when we are, in reality, the slaves of our passions. We must either obey the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, or we must obey the Spirit, to do the works of the Spirit (Rom.VI; 12) . But before the Spirit can achieve this mastery over us we must mostify the deeds of the flesh. (Rom. VIII; 13.) "Know you not," says the apostle, "that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto justice." (Rom. VI; 16.) For, though we may not wish to commit mortal sin, yet in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh we have chosen our master who will be obeyed whether we like it or not. There are no half measures in the work of our sanctification. We must be ruled, either by the law of the Spirit or of the flesh. One or the other must be supreme. "When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possesseth are in peace, but if a stronger than he come

upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armament, wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils." (Luke XI; 21.) "The flesh, with its evil propensities, is likened to a strong man armed keeping his court; the Spirit under the dominion of grace, is also likened to a strong man armed, keeping his court. They are, as it were rival powers, contending for the mastery over the soul of man. Thence we are told that the life of a Christian is a continual warfare. Both the powers are strong and armed with formidable weapons. But grace is stronger than sin, because it is strong with the strength of God. The two cannot keep their court together in the same soul, one must expel the other. It rests with us which shall reign within us. If we wish to be under the dominion of grace, then we must make implacable war against the flesh; against ourselves, in fact, subduing our own will, our understanding, our passions, our feelings, every fibre of our being to the dominion of grace. Then, and not till then, shall we enjoy true peace; that peace which the world cannot give, which surpasses all understanding, because it is the supernatural gift of God; a peace which will bear its own blessed fruits, even in this life; whilst in the next life it will bear fruit a hundred and thousand fold; for we shall then enter into the perpetual possession of the very peace of God and of His eternal rest.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"By their fruits you shall know them." (Matt. VII; 20.)

Once more, my dear brethren, we are called upon in this day's gospel, to consider the one great practical object of our lives, which strange to say, is the one thing that we treat with the utmost indifference and unconcern. We were sent into this world for one object alone, to work out our salvation by serving God and keeping His holy Commandments. (Phil. II; 12). Yet this one object seems to be the farthest of any from our thoughts. If there is anything to be done to carry out that object we either neglect it altogether or perform it with disgust and reluctance, whilst if any other object is proposed to us, not tending to that end, or even leading us away from it, we pursue it with avidity and hail it as a welcome diversion from our Spiritual exercises. Now, my dear brethren, I am far from thinking that this want of relish for Spiritual things is invariably a sign of worldliness and lukewarmness; for it is a trial with which God frequently visits His most devoted servants, and no wonder; because after all this world is a place of trial, and we must not expect to be rewarded with His Divine Consolations here. It is only after the heat and burden of the day is over that the great Master of the vineyard will apportion to each his just recompense. (Matt. XX; 4.)

This spiritual dryness, then, may be a trial of our steadfastness. But it is also the invariable consequence of worldliness. For most certainly, we cannot serve two masters. (Matt. VI; 24.) We cannot relish the things of this world and the things of God at the same time. If we seek our satisfaction in one we shall care little or nothing for the other, for the two are incompatible. All that is required of us, then, is that we should make our choice between the two. And is it not astounding to see the choice that people commonly make? Let us examine ourselves individually and see what our own thoughts and feelings are on this subject. For it is a most momentous issue, and eternity is at stake. Our eternal happiness or misery simply depends on the view we take of this world; and what is the view that most people take? Why, they live and act as if there were nothing at all beyond it or beside it. That the brute beasts should find their satisfaction within the limited circle that circumscribes them is only natural; but that man,who is possessed of reason and intelligence and free will, should limit his aspirations to the transitory pleasures and pursuits of this world, is indeed a mystery.

In acting thus, we do so with our eyes open; we know what we ought to be doing, and we know that we are neglecting that great duty. We listen to sermons and instructions, and occasionally, perhaps, read a good book; but as for changing our every-day life, we never dream of such a thing. Suppose some King were to send an ambassador to another state

on a very important mission, to carry on a difficult negotiation on which the fate of empires and the lives and happiness of millions depended. Well, this ambassador starts upon his mission. But no sooner has he started than he forgets all about the mission with which he was entrusted, and amuses himself on the journey to the top of his bent. Suppose, for instance, instead of sending to his sovereign the result of his negotiations, he were to send him some fine specimens of butterflies which he had caught on the way or a curious collection of fossils, I leave you to imagine what that monarch's opinion would be of his ambassador. And yet, this is just what we are doing. We altogether forget the object for which we were sent into this world; and we amuse ourselves by making these collections of fossils and shells and butterflies; that is to say, by giving ourselves up to the vanities of the world—to dress and idle visiting, to sensual enjoyment, to the acquisition of wealth, to the making of friendships, to the gaining of honours and distinctions, to the carrying out of some favorite scheme; just like children blowing bubbles in the air, and then pursuing them until they vanish, as they are bound to do.

Oh, if we would only lay these truths to heart, our lives would be very different from what they are. Because no one considers in his heart, therefore is all the land made devastated with spiritual desolation. (Jer. XII; 11.) Yes, and not only our lives, but what is of still greater consequence, our deaths

would be very different. For let me warn you against a very common delusion. People are too apt to imagine that it will be time enough to think about the next world when they are just on the point of quitting this, and that a few moments will suffice to prepare them to render an account of their stewardship before the strict and inexorable Judge. O! fatal delusion. You may receive all the Sacraments, but if your heart is not changed, what will they profit you? What reason, I ask, is there for supposing that one who has lived all his life in indifference and neglect of his spiritual duties, will be at the hour of death changed by a miracle of grace to a state of fervour and preparation for death? Absolutely none. I know that such a change is possible; and that it has happened in the inscrutable ways of Divine Providence. But I also know that for any one to risk his salvation on such a contingency, is itself one of the greatest sins we can commit, the sin of presumption on God's Mercy. I have turned over the pages of holy Writ and the writings of the Fathers, and I find no warrant any where for such confidence. But I do find texts in abundance, which ought to strike terror into all such lukewarm Christians. Such, for example, as the following: "I called and you refused; I stretched out my hand and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel and have neglected my reprehensions; I also will laugh in your destruction. And will mock when that shall come upon you which you feared. When suddenly calamity shall fall on

you and destruction as a tempest, shall be at hand. Then shall they call upon me and I will not hear; they shall rise in the morning and shall not find me, because they have hated instruction and received not the fear of the Lord." (Prov. I; 24, 29.)

In fact, the old saying is most true: "As a man lives, so he dies." If you live in sin and the habitual violation of God's Commandments, you will die reprobate; if you live in indifference, you will die in indifference. It is the duty, too often the painful duty, of the priest, to stand by the death-bed of those committed to his charge. Ask any priest what his experience is, and he will tell you it is simply appalling to think how great is the number of those who go before the judgment-seat of God, with scarcely an idea at all of the God before whom they are about to appear, or of the tremendous account they are about to render, and without any adequate conception of the malice of the sins they have committed. And how does this happen? It is because in life they have never taken the trouble to consider these things. Their ideas were limited to eating, drinking, sleeping, money-getting, pleasure-seeking. They had almost forgotten that they had souls at all. Now, in death it is too late to start afresh, with the agony of a mortal sickness upon them, to do that, to accomplish which a whole lifetime were all too short. How often is the priest reminded of these awful words of the Psalmist; man is "compared to senseless beasts; and is become like to them; they are laid in hell like sheep; death shall feed upon them." (Ps.

XLVIII; 15.) When the axe is already laid to the roof of the evil tree, how can it begin to bring forth good fruits?

Oh, my dear brethren, begin at once to bring forth fruit worthy of penance. (Matt. III; 8.) Let your whole life be a continual preparation for death; that you may not be surprised when the Bridegroom shall come, but that you may be ready to enter with Him to the heavenly nuptials. "By your fruits you shall know yourselves." (Matt. XXV; 10.) See whether your lives abound with good or evil fruits, and then you may know whether you be of a good or an evil stock. And what are those good fruits? They are the supernatural works which we perform in God's grace and by God's grace; otherwise they cannot be good fruits. Such works alone shall be treasured up in our heavenly Father's garner. All else is but chaff and stubble, destined only to be consumed by the fire of His indignation. As you then love your own souls, strive to bring forth these fruits of good works; especially prayer, which unlocks the treasure-house of God's graces. The holy sacrifice of the mass in which we make to God a most acceptable and propitiatory offering, the holy sacraments of confession and communion, whereby the soul is purified more and more from the stain of sin and is nourished in that supernatural life which Jesus Christ communicates to us by giving us His Own Body and Blood, are works of charity not done out of mere natural impulse or ostentation, or caprice, but from a Supernatural motive, because we

see in the poor recipients of our charity the image of God, and our brethren in Jesus Christ, Who died for them and us, to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to harbour the harbourless, to visit the sick and the imprisoned, and to bury the dead. These are works which will stand the searching light of God's judgments, and they are workswhich only the good tree can put forth. Be not satisfied then with saying: "Lord, Lord;" (Matt. VII; 21) be not satisfied with a mere external profession of the Christian religion, but do the works thereof. Do the will of your heavenly Father; now, "this is the Will of God, your sanctification." (I Thess. IV; 3.) "Do this and you shall live." (Luke X; 28.)

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"*For the wages of sin is death.*" (Rom. VI; 23.)

Which of us, my dear brethren, has not sometimes and often, had that thought in his mind which caused the apostle to cry out: "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. VII; 24.) There is no one, not utterly reprobate, who sins for the sake of sinning. We are drawn away and allured by concupiscence, which for the time being, overpowers our sense of truth, of justice and holiness. (James I; 14.) We allow ourselves to be captivated by the law of sin—

that law in our members which we see fighting against the law of our mind. (Rom. VII; 23.) Nevertheless, we are not on that account, excused. Our sin is voluntary. In fact, that which is not voluntary in so far as it is involuntary, cannot be sinful. At the great accounting day, then, we shall have to answer for all the voluntary deeds that have been done in the body. (II Cor. V; 10.) We have just heard in this Sunday's lesson, what will be the sentence passed on these works of concupiscence. That sentence is a short and summary one, and there can be no manner of doubt that it will be carried into speedy and certain execution. "The wages of sin is death," the death of the soul, by its eternal separation from the Source and Fountain of life.

Now, my brethren, if we could only keep this truth steadily before our eyes, it would be next to impossible for us to sin. No one in his senses would rush into the lion's jaws, or cast himself over a precipice. It is because the beast of prey is concealed in the dense foliage of the jungle, and the verge of the precipice is hidden from our sight, that we fall victims to these dangerous snares; and so it is with the sinner. It is not in his better moments when he is listening to the word of God; when he visits the Holy of Holies; when the grace of God touches his heart; when he is reminded by some trifling incident, perhaps, of the piety of his early days; it is not then that he makes up his mind to commit sin, but it is in the midst of his career of dissipation and distraction, surrounded by his boon companions, far removed

from all holy influences; it is then that he weaves to himself a web of self-deceit, by which he hides from himself the consequences of the course he is pursuing; and rushes headlong into the very jaws of the lion, and over the yawning precipice of hell.

We must all of us confess that we have many times fallen victims to this devouring concupiscence; for it is the common penalty of all the children of Adam to be subject to it and who is there who is not occasionally overcome by it? Perhaps indeed, we may have gone astray for many a year in that downward path which leads to the infernal abyss. But whether this be so or not, most certain it is that as long as we live we are liable to be drawn away and lured on to our destruction. Such being the case, it behooves us to be well armed against this insidious foe, and to provide ourselves with such armour as may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. (Eph. VI; 16.) Evidently it will not do to put off this preparation until the temptation comes, for if we do, we shall most certainly be overcome. There is an old proverb which says "in time of peace, prepare for war," and that nation which delays making its preparations for defence until the enemy has actually invaded its territory, will undoubtedly succomb to the attack. The confidence of a false security will soon be dispelled, and will be succeeded by the impotence of an ineffectual resistance. So it is in the spiritual warfare.

If we have hitherto been servants of sin, and

yielded our members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, but have now by God's grace, been delivered from this bondage and been made free from sin and become servants to justice, we must not, therefore, suppose that the victory is won, that the enemy is slain; that we may put off our armour and rest at ease. No, our enemy is one that dies not, nor ever sleeps. And it is just at the moment when we are off our guard that we may expect to be surprised by his attack. Hence, the apostle advises us in this Sunday's lesson, that having happily, by God's grace, been delivered from the snares of the devil, we should so to speak, entrench and fortify ourselves against any further attack on his part. What then are these entrenchments and barriers? They are simply these: the experience of the past, the thought of the future.

We have merely to open our eyes to the realities of the situation. The sinner, when he sins, is wholly preoccupied with the momentary gratification which he seeks. But would he fall into the snare so readily if he would only look back on his past experience and seriously put himself this question of the apostle: "What fruit, therefore, have you then in those things of which you are now ashamed?" Let any one put to himself this question. Looking back upon the past, upon the time when we were in the bondage of sin, the victims of impurity, of intemperance, of uncharitableness, of slothful indifference to our soul's welfare, of the greedy pursuit of this world's goods; let us ask ourselves what fruit we had

in the gratification of those desires, of which we are now so much ashamed, and what will our conscience answer? Will it not testify to months or years, as the case may be, of misery, of remorse, of bodily and mental torture, of care and trouble-mindedness, of fear, of despair, a burden and a terror to ourselves and all around us? So true is that word of the apostle: "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil." (Rom. II; 9.) St Augustine who spoke from his own bitter experience, exclaims: "O God, thou hast ordained it, that every act of insubordination on our part, should bring with it its own retribution." With these fatal consequences before our eyes, could we deliberately go and plunge ourselves again into such a sea of trouble? It would be almost impossible.

But if the experience of the past, when duly pondered, is so effectual to deter us from relapsing into sin, much more ought that other precaution be effectual, which the apostle recommends, the thought of the future. I say much more, because our experience of the past can only testify to the temporal consequences of sin, but faith enables us to look forward into the future and its terrible eternal penalties. However pleasant and flowery those paths may seem, faith teaches us that the end of them is death. "The wages of sin is death," eternal death in the prison house of God's justice. What a terrible price to pay for a mere momentary gratification, an eternity of torment! But, my brethren, it is not my intention on this occasion, to dwell upon this

awful subject, the torments of hell. They are far beyond anything we can possibly imagine. All the torments of this life, in comparison with those, are as a painted fire compared with a real consuming fire. But the most appalling circumstance attending these torments is their eternity. Well indeed, might the Prophet cry out: "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Is. XXXIII; 14.)

Yes, my brethren, the thought that we have committed but one mortal sin in our lives, and thereby run the risk of falling into the pit of fire, whence there is no redemption, should be enough to fill us with fear and trembling for the rest of our lives, and secure us against the danger of ever again incurring so terrible a doom. But how if we have spent whole years in sin? If we have gone on serving iniquity unto iniquity, and added sin to sin? Provoking God at every moment, to cut us off from His Mercy and allow us to fall into the Hand of His Justice. And if in spite of our prevarication, His Mercy has never been withdrawn from us, and has brought us to repentance, surely the thought of this ought to fill our hearts with gratitude to God for His Mercy, and with a holy fear of His Justice, if ever we should render ourselves amenable thereto, by relapsing into sin.

Again, much might be said on the other hand, by way of encouraging us to persevere in the way of holiness, were we similarly to look back on our past experience of the time we have spent in God's service and in the practice of virtue; if happily we are

able to look back on such a time. What joy and consolation may we not derive from that retrospect, even though our life may have been filled with hardships and sufferings. Again, what a source of strength and encouragement, is it not to look forward to these eternal joys which will be the recompence of those who shall overcome the temptations of the devil, the world and the flesh; and have persevered to the end in the service of God. For they shall bear their "fruit unto sanctification, and shall enter into the possession of everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods.*" (Luke XVI; 1.)

In this parable, my dear brethren, our Divine Lord puts before us serious considerations respecting the account we shall one day have to give to God of the manner in which we have fulfilled the duties of our state of life. The rich man, then, is Almighty God, from Whom comes every good and perfect gift; (James I; 17.) Who has given to us abundantly of His riches, inasmuch as He has given us His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, "in Whom we have redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph.

I; 7.) Again, "that He might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty towards us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. II; 7.) The same apostle gloried that to him was given the "grace to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. III; 8.) He prays that God may grant us, "according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit with might unto the inward man;" (16) and that God may "supply all our want, according to His riches in Glory in Christ Jesus." (Phil. IV; 19.)

Almighty God, then, the Source and Possessor of these riches of His Grace and Glory, has been pleased to communicate them to us; so that we are all of us, in truth "stewards of the manifold Grace of God." (I Pet. IV; 10.) Now, as the apostle reminds us· "it is required among the dispensers that a man be found faithful." (I Cor. IV; 2.) Let us, therefore, consider our obligations in this respect and how we have fulfilled them. Our stewardship comprises all our duties towards God, towards our neighbour and towards ourselves; which opens out a vast field of contemplation which it would be impossible to survey thoroughly. We will, therefore, consider briefly some few of the chief duties which a faithful steward is bound to render towards God. Now, in relation to us, God is our Father, Whom we are bound to love—our Master Whom we are bound to obey—our Judge Whom we are bound to propitiate.

1. God is our Father in the truest and highest sense of the word, so much so that our Lord has said:

"call none your father on earth; One is your Father, Who is in heaven." (Matt. XXIII; 9.) Hence, the apostle tells us that of God the Father "all paternity is named;" that is to say derived, "in heaven and on earth." (Eph. III; 15.) So that human paternity is but a feeble reflection of the Divine Paternity. As our Father, He has loved us with an everlasting love. (Jer. XXXI; 3.) But if He is our Father, then are we His children; and, as such, we are bound to love Him; whereas, how true is that reproach uttered by the Prophet: "the son knoweth the father, and the servant his master. If, then, I be father, where is My honour? and if I be a master, where is My fear with the Lord of hosts?" (Mal. I; 6.) And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou love Him with all thy heart?" (Deut. X; 12.) Here, then, is a subject for your consideration. God has made you stewards of the priceless treasure of His love. Have you proved faithful stewards? Or, have you not rather squandered it on unworthy objects? Has your love been bestowed when alone it is worthily bestowed on your Father in heaven? What matters it if you keep within the pale of the Church, and observe all the other Commandments, if you neglect the first and greatest Commandment: "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind?" (Luke X; 27.) If he that offends in the least is become guilty of all, how guilty shall he be, who habitually violates the greatest of all the Commandments, to love God? (James II; 10.)

Let us ask ourselves, then, how often in the day, in the week, in the month, do we make acts of the love of God? How many of our actions are performed from this motive, and not from self-love, from imperfect and sinful motives? With what dispositions of ardent love or of listless indifference do we assist at the holy sacrifice, kneel at the tribunal of penance, receive the holy Communion, which is the Sacrament of love? Now we may understand why the whole world is plunged in sin, in darkness, and in confusion. It is because charity has grown cold, because men love not God. Begin then, to do now what you hope to do for all eternity, to love God, to dispense wisely that treasure of Divine love, that when death comes, it may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

2. God is also our Master. And this also, in the strictest sense of the word. For He made us, and not we ourselves. (Ps. XCIX; 3.) He is the Lord of all Whom all things obey. The stars, as they move in their orbits; the flowers as they grow, the myriads of living things that people the earth, the air and the waters, acknowledge His empire, and obey His Command. For they, as the Psalmist sings: "fulfill His Word." (Ps. CXLVIII; 8.) How much more, then, is man bound to obey His Creator? Man who alone is endowed with reason, and is able, therefore, to render his reasonable service to His Lord and Master; who can glorify his Master and ennoble himself by obeying Him. And yet, have we not heard the reproach: "if I be a Master, where is My fear,

saith the Lord of hosts?" Though man is bound by so many obligations to obey his Creator, yet he alone dares to transgress His commands, and to disturb the harmony which rules in God's universe. And what excuse can he plead? Certainly not ignorance. "This commandment that I command thee this day, is not above thee, nor far off from thee * * * but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (Deut. XXX; 11, 14.) Yes, it is graven by the Finger of God on the tables whereon are written His holy Commandments. It is even graven on our hearts, in our consciences, it is preached to us by the infallible voice of the Church. If then we go astray, it is not from ignorance, but through perversity of our own will. When shall we understand the depth of the malice which is implied in deliberately violating the known Commandments of God?

No doubt, we are exposed to many temptations, the suggestions of the evil one, the allurements of the world, the vicious propensities of the flesh. But we always have the help of God's grace, by which we may overcome all these enemies; and were we faithful stewards of that grace, we should overcome them all. If the love of God does not move us to greater fidelity in His service, at least, let us consider the account we shall have, one day, to give to our dread Master, when the awful announcement is made to us that now we can be stewards no longer. Nothing will escape His scrutiny. On the one side will appear all the graces we have received from Him; and

who shall number them? From the first moment of our existence we have been encompassed by the arms of His merciful Providence. His grace has constantly visited us, either interiorly by His holy inspirations and through sacraments, or exteriorly through the circumstances of life in which we were placed. Whilst, on the other side, will appear the black catalogue of our sins—sins of commission by thought, word and deed—sins of ommission, and, worst of all, the neglect of those very graces which stand arrayed against us. We have wasted our Master's goods! If we thought more of this account which we shall have to give, we should not fall so readily into sin. Though God is our Master, yet His yoke is sweet, and His burden light. (Matt. XI; 30.)

We have the Sacraments by which the precious Blood of Jesus Christ is conveyed to our souls, to cleanse them from every stain of sin, to strengthen them against evil habits, and to nourish them with supernatural life. We have the prayers and merits of all the Church, in heaven and on earth, and, above all, of the ever-blessed Mother of God. Why, then, should we despond? A Christian's progress consists in perseverance: in ever rising up from repeated falls. It is only by persevering, and renewing our resolution, that we can obtain the victory. It is of no use folding our arms, and saying: "Dig I cannot; and to beg I am ashamed." We *must* dig, and we *must* beg. We must root out our evil habits by the grace of God; and to obtain that grace, we must beg for it, we must pray.

3. God is our Judge. Our Lord has Himself presented to us the rich man, not only in the character of Master over the steward, but also as his judge. When we stand in the presence of God to be judged, we can do nothing but submit to the sentence which He shall pronounce. No tears or prayers will move Him then. The time for mercy will have passed. But, happily for us, we may propitiate our Judge now. Now, we may entreat Him not to "enter into judgment with His servant; for, in His sight, no man living shall be justified." (Ps. CXLII; 2.) How then, are we to propitiate Him? He has Himself placed the treasures of His Mercy in our hands, for us to deal with them as we please. Oh! let us not squander these precious treasures. First, there is the propitiatory sacrifice of the mass, in which the Lamb of God is offered up as a victim pleading for mercy on our behalf. Then, there are all the good works and prayers which, as long as we are in communion with the Body of Christ, are esteemed by Him as if done by Himself; there are also the opportunities to which our Lord alludes in the parable, of making friends of the Mammon of iniquity, by bestowal of our superfluous goods on His poor members, or for other pious uses. By 'goods,' I mean not merely gold and silver, but also our time, our health, our strength, our comfort. For of all these things we are not the absolute owners, but only the stewards. Examine yourselves, therefore, and see whether you be good stewards of the manifold grace of God; and begin in time, to prepare for the great

account which you will have to render; that when that time comes, you may hear those consoling words: "Well done good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. XXV; 21.)

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"You have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, 'Abba,' (Father") (Rom. VIII; 15.)

Among the many benefits which have been bestowed upon us through the Incarnation of God the Son, surely, one of the greatest is that to which the apostle alludes in this Sunday's lesson: that we are the children of God. For, we are the brethren of Jesus Christ according to the flesh; inasmuch as He assumed our nature. And, since He is the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, we, who are His brethren, have received through Him the adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, Father. Every day when we go on our knees to pour forth our prayers to God, what is the title by which we are taught to address Him? It is 'Our Father, Who art in heaven.' (Matt. VI; 9.) Such was not the privilege of those who lived under the old law of bondage. To them, God was a God of majesty, greatly to be feared; but to us, since the Incarnation, He has revealed Himself as a Father, greatly to be loved. Let

us then dwell for a few moments upon this consideration of God's love for us, in choosing to adopt us as His children, in order that we may be moved to a more tender filial love of Him who is our Father in heaven.

The grounds of the Divine Paternity, in relation to His creatures, are indeed manifold: and they are to be found, even antecedently to the Incarnation. For, by the very fact of creating us to His Own Image and Likeness, we became His children. In the great work of creation, God created the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the sea, the myriad forms of animal and vegetable life; and God saw that they were all very good. (Gen. I; 31.) In their beauty and order and power were reflected the Divine attributes of Him Who created them. But when it came to the work of creating man, the language of Scripture is very different: "And God said, let us make man to Our image and likeness." (Gen. I; 26.) God gave to man, what He had not given to other terrestrial creatures, a soul capable of knowing and loving Him, a soul stamped with His Own Divine image, in which, not only were the Divine attributes reflected, but power was given us, whereby we might be called, and should be in very truth, the sons of God. (I John III; 1.)

Another evidence of this truth is to be found in the continual Providence of God which watches over us. For, just as earthly parents would not be deserving of the name, if they failed to watch over their offspring, so Almighty God shows His fatherly love of

us, not only by creating us, but by preserving us and guiding us by His Providence through the devious ways of life. Nor is this Providence limited to the good and dutiful children of our heavenly Father, but extends to all alike.

The ministers of this Providence are the angels of God, and every one who comes into this world has an angel specially deputed by God to watch over him during life, to defend him from the enemy, to direct him in all his ways, and guide him in the way of salvation. "He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Ps. XC; 11, 12.) These holy angels watch over us from our earliest infancy. "See," says our Divine Lord, "that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the Face of My Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. XVIII; 10.) How grateful, then, ought we not to be, for being thus provided with an angelic guardian to protect us in the dangerous pilgrimage of this life, for it is they who pluck our feet out of the snare. (Ps. XXIV; 15.) When St. Peter was delivered out of prison, those who heard of his re-appearance said: "It is his angel." (Act. XII; 15.) Their ministrations are directed towards the attainment of our last end, the salvation of our souls. "Are they not all," says the apostle, "ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" (Hebr. I; 14.)

In order to strengthen our confidence in this angelic guardianship, several striking examples are recorded in the holy Writ, which manifest the loving care and solicitude which the holy angels exert on behalf of their clients. Thus the younger Tobias was accompanied by the Archangel Raphael, in a visible form, through a long and perilous journey. He rescued him from many and great dangers both of body and soul. He disarmed the malice of the demon who sought his destruction. He restored the blessing of sight to his blind father. (Tob. VI; II.) Now, my brethren, all this was written for our instruction (Rom. XV; 4), to remind us that the same beneficient Providence, which watched over Tobias in a visable form, watches over us as really though invisibly. Hence, if we do go astray, it is through neglecting the guidance of our angelic monitor. There are also the examples of the great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, whose privilege it was to hold familiar converse with angels through whose ministrations the magnificent promises of God were fulfilled in their behalf. (Gal. III; 19.) Those promises also made to us, for we are the children of promise, being the seed of Abraham to whom and to his seed the promises were made. Consequently, the same angelic ministrations will be extended to us, if only we prove ourselves worthy to receive them.

But the most striking proof which God has given us of His fatherly love for all mankind, even for sinners, is to be found in the patience and forbear-

ance with which He has borne, and still bears, the wickedness of man, from the beginning of the world till now. We cannot, indeed, measure the depth of this mystery, because we cannot understand the depth of the malice of mortal sin. But we know enough to stand amazed at Almighty God's patience, Who, though He could in an instant annihilate those who offend Him, nevertheless, bears with infinite patience the outrages that are committed against Him, in the hope that sinners may be converted and do penance. Nay, so great is the merciful tenderness of God, even towards sinners, that He counts it one of the greatest crimes we can commit, to doubt His clemency even for an instant. The children of Israel were upbraided by Moses for tempting God, because they said: "Is the Lord amongst us or not?" (Exod. XVII; 7.) And amongst the prevarications of His people which God denounced by His prophet Ezekiel was this, that they said: "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth." (Ezek. VIII; 12.) The City of Sion mourned because she was led captive; and sinners mourn because they are in the bondage of sin. But let them not say that they are forsaken by God. "And Sion said: 'the Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me.' Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the Son of her womb? And if she should forget yet will I not forget thee; behold, I have graven thee in My Hands." (Is. XLIX; 14, 16.) Can any example more touching than this be adduced to prove the love which God bears to all His

creatures? That it is infinitely more tender and more enduring than the love which a mother bears for the babe at her breast.

That you may the better appreciate this infinite Love of God our Father, just consider what would happen if we had to expect from Him, instead of a Father's compassion, a Master's rigorous justice. God created our first parents and clothed them with the robe of innocence and Divine grace. And yet they prevaricated. They deliberately sinned against Him; so that He was compelled to pronounce against them and their posterity that terrible malediction: "Cursed is the earth in thy work with labour and toil, shall thou eat thereof all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. And they were driven out of the Paradise of pleasure, to till the earth from which they were taken." (Gen. III; 17, 18, 23.) And yet, when we consider the beauty and fertility of the earth even in its fallen state, and the many comforts and pleasures with which it has pleased God to surround us, it would seem as if God had almost relented and revoked His curse; His Love prevailing over His Justice. For the "tender mercies of the Lord are over all His works." (Ps. CXLIV; 9) and "He hateth none of those things which He has created." (Wisd. XI; 25.)

Such, my dear brethren, are some few of the grounds which entitle us to cry to God: 'Abba,' Father! Reasons, too, which apply to all men, for there is no one who is excepted from this universal Providence. What then, is our duty but to conduct

ourselves as dutiful children towards an indulgent Father? To love and reverence Him with all the affection of our hearts, to obey His every wish, to avoid the very shadow of what is displeasing to Him. And if we need any other inducement but that of gratitude to render Him the tribute of our filial love, surely that blessed hope which the apostle holds out is sufficient; the hope that we are predestined by our heavenly Father to share in the eternal inheritance of His glory and happiness in heaven.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*My house is the house of prayer.*" (Luke XIX; 46.)

The whole mystery of the Incarnation, my dear brethren, is summed up in that Name which was given to the word Incarnate by the Prophet, Emanuel, which means God with us. (Is. VII; 14.) The infinite love of God towards His creatures could not be satisfied, until He had descended from the throne of His dominion in the highest heaven to this world of darkness and of sin; there to clothe Himself with the servile form of our fallen nature. All mankind had gone astray. And He the good Shepherd, leaving His angels, the faithful flock, in the fold of His love, came into the wilderness of this world to seek and to save the sheep that was lost, fallen man. This, then, was the work which our Lord came to do, to take upon Himself our nature, to become our

Brother, and so to take us by the hand and even to fold us in His Arms, and carry us in His Bosom, to restore us to our Father's house. Now, let us consider how this great work is accomplished, for clearly it is not done all at once. The work of regeneration and sanctification has to be done in each individual soul, as if it were alone with God in the universe.

Our position then in this life, is thus summed up by the apostle: "Whilst we are in the body we are absent from the Lord." (II Cor. V; 6.) "We have not here a lasting City." (Hebr. XIII; 14.) Yes, we are pilgrims in a strange land, far from our true country; we dwell in tents pitched in desert places, far, far away from our Father's house. Now, see what our Lord has done for us. Taking compassion on our forlorn and destitute condition, He has come to join us in our pilgrimage. He has pitched His tent among us in order to comfort and strengthen us, to be our Guide through the bewildering ways of life, towards our eternal home. "I am the way, the truth and the life." (Joh. XIV; 1.) The way: by walking in His footsteps we shall not be lost. The truth: by believing in Him, we shall not be deceived. The Life: by feeding our soul with His precious Body and Blood, we shall not die nor faint by the way. He came to illuminate us that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death; to direct our feet in the way of peace. (Luke I;79.) This, then, is the one great truth that makes life supportable, salvation possible; which makes those who were heretofore darkness, now light in the Lord: Emanuel, God with us. (Eph. V; 8.)

God is with us by His creative act, whereby He made us and all things by His only Word. He is with us by His Omnipotence, whereby He holds us and all things in the hollow of His Hand. He is with us by His Providence, whereby He disposes all things towards the manifestation of His Divine attributes: "that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words, and mayest overcome when thou art judged." (Ps. L; 6.) But it is not of this kind of presence that I now speak. It is of His presence through the Incarnation. That is, by His grace inwardly in our hearts, and by His corporal presence in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. These two kinds of presence are intimately connected with each other. Grace comes to us through the blessed Sacrament. "Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you." (Joh. VI; 54.) Again, the reason of His corporal presence amongst us in the blessed Sacrament is that His Grace may be poured forth in our heart. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." Now, my brethren, let us consider the bearing of this day's gospel on this two-fold presence of our Lord amongst us. If Jesus Christ is corporally present amongst us, He must have a house to live in. Again, as that corporal presence exists for a definite purpose, for the sake of effecting His interior presence by grace in our hearts, therefore the place of His habitation must exist for a purpose beyond the mere reposing therein of the Body of our Lord; it must also exist for the carrying

out of the work of grace in the hearts of those whom He came to visit.

Now, these two great truths are contained in the words of our text: "My house is the house of prayer." Jesus then. has a house amongst us which He can call His Own, in which He dwells, where He is at home. But not only this. His house is not only the place whose His Glory dwelleth, but it is also the house of prayer (Ps. XXV; 8); our house too, wherein we communicate with Him spiritually by grace, wherein the work of sanctification is accomplished in our souls. Let us briefly consider these two points.

1. This is the house of God. In the same strict and literal sense in which we say that our houses are our own, our Lord has placed His tabernacle here and dwells here. He lives here in the same Flesh and Blood which He took from His immaculate Mother, in the same Soul which was united to that Body, in the same Godhead which the heaven of heavens cannot contain. When the patriarch Jacob awoke from his mysterious dream, he trembled and said: "Verily God was in this place and I knew it not." (Gen. XXVIII; 16.) But we do know it; and yet we tremble not at that Divine presence. When Moses approached the burning bush, a voice bade him take the shoes from his feet, for the spot whereon he stood was the holy ground. (Exod. III; 5.) But we come into this sanctuary with feet shod, that is soiled, with the commerce and traffic of the world, with walking in the world's ways, and

we revere not the mystery of the burning bush unconsumed; that is, of the Lamb of God Who is slain and yet lives upon our altars. (Apoc. V; 6.)

Ah! my brethren, if the judgments of God were more manifest under the old law, they are none the less real in the new. Nay, in as much as the old sanctuary and the presence of God therein, were but a shadow and figure of the Holy of Holies in the new dispensation, in the same proportion will God exact greater reverence to this latter and will inflict more terrible punishment on those who defile and dishonour it. That ancient sanctuary had to be adorned in the most sumptuous way. And God Himself prescribed the ritual to be observed down to the most minute particulars. Whoever made incense like unto that used in the sanctuary to enjoy the perfume thereof, that man should die. (Exod. XXX; 38.) Nadab and Abin, for offering unhallowed fire in the sanctuary, were themselves consumed with fire. (Lev. X; 1, 2.) And by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel, the most terrible woes are pronounced on the people of Israel, because they had despised and profaned God's sanctuary. (Ezek. V.) If, then, you do not see the visible effects of God's indignation, do not, therefore, suppose that you can despise His sanctuary with impunity. Surely a Christian people does not need to be governed by threats and punishments. We live under a law of love, and God would rather draw us by the sweet attractions of His Grace and love, than compel us by the threats of His Vengeance. But it is none the less a law; and he that

will not be moved by love to reverence God's house, for him is reserved a day of wrath, when God will judge His Own cause. Resolve then, to reverence God's sanctuary; and remember that it is here that the King of Kings holds His court; that thousands of thousands minister to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stand before Him (Dan. VII; 10), who will come one day in clouds of majesty to judge the world. (Luke XXI; 27.)

2. But the church is not only the house of God where He dwells, it is also the house of prayer. Is it so, my brethren? It cannot be a house of prayer unless we pray therein. Do we pray? Do we render this homage to our Lord; or do we not make the house of God a den of thieves, by robbing Him of that love and praise and adoration which He claims at our hands? Ask your own consciences whether you really pray; or if you do not, rather, pay Him mere lip-service, whilst your hearts are far from Him. It is the homage of the heart which our Lord wants: "Son, give Me thy heart;" (Prov. XXIII; 26) and it is just that which we refuse to give Him. It is bad enough to turn our backs on our blessed Lord all the week to abandon our Father's house and to occupy ourselves with the miserable cares of this perishable life, with never a thought for Jesus in the Sacrament of His love; this, I say, is bad enough. But, to come here once a week for a short hour or half hour, and to spend that short time in forgetfulness of the Divine presence, such conduct may well provoke our Lord's indignation. This is the house of prayer. This

means that the holy sacrifice is here offered up, as an act of supreme homage to God, in gratitude for all His blessings, as a propitiation for our sins, as a means of obtaining all that we want from the Author of all good. It means that here are administered those sacraments which convey to us the precious Blood of Christ, purifying us from sin, and strengthening us with supernatural life. It means that here Jesus sits upon His Mercy-seat to hear our petitions and to grant them. If God promised such great things on behalf of the old figurative temple, what will He not do on behalf of this temple, where He is corporally present amongst us?

Resolve then, my brethren, to reverence more the house of God, to adorn and beautify it, especially with those most precious gems, your love and devotion. Resolve also to make it really a house of prayer; to be present here in spirit, as well as in body, to come and drink of the waters which flow from the Saviour's fountains: (Is. XII; 3) to seek your consolation here, where it ought to be found, in your Father's house. Let us go, then, with all confidence to the throne of grace in order that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid. (Hebr. IV; 16.)

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Another Sermon. Abridged from Bourdaloue.)

"*And when he drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: 'if thou hadst known, and that, in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace.'*" (Luke XIX; 41, 42.)

The City of Jerusalem, over which our Lord wept on this occasion, is a figure and type of the human soul whose obstinancy in sin and impenitence, in spite of all that He has done to reclaim and save it, our Divine Lord deplores in such moving terms: 'if thou hadst but known, and that, in this thy day.' The people of Jerusalem might very well have known the things that were conducive to their peace; for they had seen and heard the Redeemer of the world preaching to them the gospel of peace, and making evident to them His Divine mission and authority by manifest signs and wonders. But they remained obdurate; they wilfully closed their eyes, and shut their ears; and, therefore, our Lord wept over the faithless City because He foresaw the utter ruin which would befall them in consequence of their incredulity.

But, in what respect is their condition comparable to that of the obdurate sinner of to-day? In this that he, too, closes his eyes to the light of Divine grace, and shuts his ears to the voice of God calling him to repentance; and, therefore, our Lord weeps over him, and deplores his wilful blindness and hardness of heart. But it may be urged that the sinner

of to-day has not the same chance as had the people of Jerusalem in the time of our Lord. He does not see Jesus Christ, nor the miracles which He wrought; nor does he hear His Divine Voice proclaiming the things which are for his peace. I reply, that he has an all-sufficient means of acquiring that saving knowledge; and that his neglect of those means entails a responsibility as great and consequences as fatal, as in the case of the incredulous Jews. I say that every sinner may, if he chooses, hear the Voice of God calling him to repentance; and may, if he chooses, obey that call; and I say, moreover, that that call is expressed by the remorse of conscience which every sinner feels when he lapses into sin. I propose, then, to say a few words on this subject, to show that this remorse of conscience is a grace, and a great grace, and, indeed, the first grace which God gives the sinner.

I. That it is a grace is clear enough. For grace is defined by theologians as a supernatural help which God gives to men, to enable them to do something meritorious of eternal life, and if they are in sin, to bring about their conversion. Now, this description applies exactly to remorse of conscience. For, beyond all question, it comes from God; and it springs from the infinite love of God, Who desires not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. Moreover, I say, that it is a great grace, endowed with admirable qualities, which distinguish it from all other graces. It is not merely an exterior grace which a sinner may easily overlook or neglect;

but it is an interior grace; it is the Voice of Him who "searcheth the heart and the veins;" (Ps. VII; 10) of Him, Who has sent "the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying:—(Gal. IV; 6.) And what does He cry? St. Augustine says, He cries out against the Spirit of wantonness which lead us astray. Again, it is the first grace which God gives the sinner; for, by his sin, the sinner has shut the door of his heart against all other graces but this. Remorse of conscience is the sole witness which God, in His Mercy, still leaves in the sinner's breast, to plead His cause, and to bring the sinner back to his allegiance. Hence, it is the first grace given to the sinner; and unless he corresponds with this and obeys this call, it is vain to hope for his ultimate conversion.

It is also a grace of a most marvellous kind. For, though it is a grace as we have seen, and a gift of God, yet it is engendered by our very sin. Hence, St. John Chrysortom justly exclaims: how wonderful are the ways of God! The sin we have just committed, is made by God the material out of which is formed the grace which reproaches us with having committed it. He makes use of our guilt in order to justify us; and makes that which brought death to our soul, instrumental in restoring it to life: the antidote lies close by the poison. Further, it is the most persistent and enduring of graces. It follows the sinner everywhere. Its voice is not stifled in the riot of the noisiest revels. It penetrates the most secret hiding-places, where vice seeks to conceal itself. The more deeply the sinner plunges into

sin, the more loudly and persistently does this inward monitor lift up its voice and protest. It is, moreover, universal in its application. For, it cannot be said of this grace, what the Prophet says of some graces, that they are not given to every nation, or only to a favoured few. (Ps. CXLVII; 20.) This is a grace which is given to every sinner without, exception. This is that "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil," of which the apostle speaks. (Rom. II; 9.)

It is, lastly, the most certain and sure of all graces in this sense: that with regard to other graces, men may become the victims of illusion; whereas, there can be no illusion about this. The sinner who, struck with horror and remorse at the contemplation of his sins, cries out: "I have sinned," (II Kings XII; 13) cannot be the victim of illusion or deceit. Such a sentiment cannot be inspired by the spirit of lies, but only by the Spirit of holiness and justice. This grace, therefore, is a most powerful agent in disposing the sinner to repentance; because it forces the sinner to accuse himself; and how shall he escape such an accusation as that? Other witnesses may be suborned or influenced by passion and prejudice; but this is a witness whose evidence cannot be gainsaid; who cannot be influenced by passion or prejudice; for, it is the culprit who testifies against himself. A new kind of judgment, says St. Teno of Verona, in which, if the accused excuses his crime, he is condemned; whereas, if he confesses it, he is acquitted. It is to the operation of this grace that

must be attributed that bruising and crushing of the heart which is expressed by the term 'Contrition.' It is the sting of remorse which causes the sinner to enter into himself; which, in the language of St. Jerome, opens the tombs, and allows the imprisoned soul to escape; which is able to break the rocks of evil habits, and, out of the fragments, to create children of Abraham: which, in a word, is able to produce such models of repentance as a David, a Magdalene, or a St. Augustine.

II. Having now considered some of the qualities of this grace of remorse of conscience, a few words remain to be said on the second part of our subject, the practical part: namely, the serious responsibility incurred, and fatal consequences which ensue, on the rejection of this grace. In rejecting, or not corresponding with this grace we, in fact, resist the holy Spirit. We make ourselves like those Jews whom Stephen, the Protomartyr, thus addressed: "Stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart, ye ever resist the Holy Ghost." (Acts VII; 51.) And how did they resist Him? asks St. Chrysortom, except by refusing to listen to the reproaches of their conscience for not having received Jesus Christ as the Messiah; for having, on the contrary, put Him to a cruel death. But there is more than this. The rejection of any and every grace is a resistance to the Holy Spirit. But there is this terrible consequence of not listening to the reproaches of a remorseful conscience, that the sinner thereby cuts himself off from the source of all other graces. If I might dare to use the expression,

he makes it impossible for God to save him. For in the supernatural, as in the natural, order, God proceeds by orderly methods; and, since God sends this grace to awaken the sinner, and to dispose him for further graces, if the sinner will not awake to a sense of his condition nor listen to this voice, how shall he profit by, or even have access, to any other grace? He, in a manner, by his obduracy, dries up the very stream and source of grace. I said that God, by a miracle of His Divine Goodness, makes our sin the occasion of giving us this extraordinary grace. But the sinner who rejects this grace, by a miracle of perversity renders this grace unfruitful, and seems to vie with the Omnipotent, by opposing an excess of malice to the excess of the Divine Goodness. It has also been pointed out that this grace is, of all graces, the most constant and persistent. If then the sinner, notwithstanding, remains obdurate, this must necessarily suppose a malice and perversity of will the most inveterate and unsurmountable. Some indeed, have gone so far as to glory in their callous indifference, and to make a boast of their freedom from any remorse of conscience. Whether or not their boasting be well-founded, whether they have really succeeeded in hushing the voice of this internal monitor, I care not to examine; I should very much doubt it. But, however it may be, this I say, that such a state cannot come about without making an eternal war upon God; without saying to God: You determine to attack me on every side, and I am resolved to resist You to the uttermost.

If, then, there be any among you who have heretofore lived in habits of sin, stifling the voice of conscience; or if, unhappily, any one should hereafter fall into sin, Oh! then, do not turn a deaf ear to this faithful monitor whom God has sent you to lead you back to the path of duty. "To-day, if you shall hear His voice, (Ps. XCIV; 8) harden not your hearts," but listen humbly to its admonitions and obey its suggestions; that so you may come to "know the things which are for your peace."

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson)

"*God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.*" (I Cor. X; 13.)

We have been told that the life of man upon earth is a warfare; (Job. VII; 1) and, if we had not been told, each one's experience must be a sufficient proof of the truth of this saying. For what is our life but a continual struggle against those powerful enemies who are bent on our destruction? At any rate, such is the experience of all who are striving to keep the narrow path which leads to life eternal. (Matt. VII; 13.) We can well understand that those who prefer to walk in the broad road that leads to perdition, have little or no experience of this struggle and of this warfare. Having given themselves up to be the slaves of their passions, or of some one passion, they

soon succeed in stifling the remorseful stings of a guilty conscience. Following blindly the instincts of their corrupt nature, they glide insensibly down the stream, wholly unconscious of effort or resistance; because they have resigned themselves passively to the current which is sweeping them along. It seems at first to wander through pleasant fields and groves, its banks seem to be adorned with bright coloured flowers and tempting fruits. In their onward course they meet with nothing to obstruct their way; all is smooth and easy and delightful. There is everything to gratify the senses: charming prospects, fragrant odours, melodious sounds, delicate viands, and luxurious ease. Only there is just one thing to be said, my brethren, in order to complete the picture, and it is this: that this gently-flowing stream is slowly, but surely, gliding on to the vast, the illimitable, the shoreless ocean of eternity, whence its waters never shall return; into which it shall be merged; and being commingled therewith, it shall be wholly changed, so that all its sweetness shall be turned to bitterness, and momentary pleasure shall be succeeded by eternal pain.

To such as these, the children of this world, life is not a warfare; because they surrender to the enemy without striking a blow. It is not a struggle; for they have formed alliances and compacts with the enemies of their soul. To such as these, temptation is unknown simply because it is unnecessary in their case. For why should they be tempted? Evidently there is no need to tempt any one to do that which he is, by habit and determination, resolved to do.

Hence, it is especially the lot of those who are endeavouring to serve God faithfully, to be tempted. It was because the holy patriarch Job was a simple and upright man, fearing God and avoiding evil, that Satan came down to tempt him to the last extremity. Hence, too, the very fact of being tempted, so far from causing us to feel despondent or melancholy as is sometimes the case, ought rather to inspire us with courage and consolation. For we may be sure that the enemy of our souls would not think it worth his while to tempt us, if he were already sure of his victims. To encourage us still more under temptation, our Lord, Himself consented to be tempted, that we, His followers, might be comforted by His example, and strengthened by His grace to resist and overcome, as He did, all the wily insinuations of the evil one.

Again, what would our virtue be worth if it were not exposed to trial; and how should we win the crown of life, except by victorious combat? For "no one," says the apostle, "shall be crowned, unless he shall have lawfully fought." (II Tim. II; 5.) As temptations, then, are necessary for the trial of our virtue, and for the earning of our reward, let us always be prepared for them, and not be disheartened when they come upon us. Be assured of this, that God is faithful, Who will not allow us to be tempted above our strength, but will make of temptation issue that we shall be able to bear it.

At the same time, there are certain rules by observing which, we shall be enabled to guard ourselves

against the assaults of temptation. To one or two of these practical rules I wish to call your attention on this occasion. The first rule is—to be always watchful. "Watch and pray," says our Divine Lord "that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. XXVI; 41.) The soldier who sleeps at his post may receive a mortal wound which, if he had been on his guard, he might easily have avoided. Even so, the devil who never sleeps, takes the opportunity when we are off our guard, of suggesting sin which, in our watchful moments, we should have instantly repelled. It is necessary, then, for us to be always on the watch: that we should control our own impulses and feelings; that we should be able to say with the Psalmist: "My soul is always in my hands:" (Ps. CXVIII; 109) that we should ever be mindful of what the wise man says: "unless thou hold thyself diligently in the fear of the Lord, thy house shall quickly be overthrown." (Eccle. XXVII; 4.)

Another rule to be observed, is to foster a spirit of compunction and sorrow for past sin. For the familiar presence of sin before our imaginations, which is the result of frequent temptation, causes us to lose sight of its deformity; and this tendency must be counteracted by acts of contrition, moving us to detest sin above all other evils. It may, indeed, happen that the repugnance we feel for sin is not so sensible as the pleasure which the sinner takes in it; but this does not matter; as Almighty God looks rather to the resolution of the will than to our feelings; inasmuch as our will is absolutely in our own power, whereas our feelings are not.

The next rule to be observed, is not to be disheartened if, unhappily, we fall into sin. There is, perhaps, no mistake in the spiritual life more common and more fatal than this. If the devil, after he has succeeded in tempting us to sin, can only succeed in causing us to grow disheartened and despondent, and so to give up the struggle, and to go on in our sin, then indeed he will have gained a great victory over us. Whereas, on the other hand if, after falling into sin, we quickly rise again by God's grace, and entering into ourselves acknowledge with humility our own weakness and have recourse with confidence to the Divine assistance, then, instead of gaining a victory over us, he will himself have suffered a disastrous defeat; we shall rise up with renewed courage and redoubled vigour to carry on the Spiritual combat with all the powers of darkness. (Col. I; 13.)

Another rule is, not to confound temptation with sin. There is no sin, except in so far as our will consents to the temptation. As long as the will resists the temptation, no matter how long it may last, nor how vividly it may be represented to the imagination, the temptation, so far from being imputed to our guilt, will rather merit for us a reward in heaven. It is especially necessary to bear this in mind in the case of those movements of sensuality or of anger, which are the most common form of temptation. These movements, so long as we do not culpably give occasion to them, and so long as we do not wilfully take pleasure in, or consent to

them, are not sinful, whatever involuntary effects they may produce in our physical being; for we are responsible only for that which depends on our free will.

Lastly, we should cultivate a spirit of confidence in God, and a spirit of prayer, which is the fruit of that confidence. If only we pray with due humility and confidence, it is utterly impossible that we should not be heard, because God has pledged His Divine word to that effect. It may be that we shall not obtain the particular grace we ask for; but we shall certainly obtain that which is a thousand times better: namely, that which God knows to be best for us. When St. Paul prayed to be delivered from a temptation of the flesh, the answer he received was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." (II Cor. XII; 9.) Have we not, indeed, abundant motives for confidence in the infinite goodness of God? True, He is a God of justice; but His justice is reserved for the impenitent sinner who, despising the commandments of God, is bent on continuing in his sins. To such as these the apostle cries out: Despisest thou the riches of His Goodness and patience and long-suffering? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God? (Rom. II; 4, 5.) But to those who sincerely grieve for their sins, who strive to serve God, to keep His commandments, and to overcome the temptations which will

never fail to beset our path, every day of our lives; to these God shows Himself rich in mercy, inexhaustible in patience and long-suffering. "The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy. As far as the east is from the west so far hath He removed our iniquities from us. As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him." (Ps. CII; 8, 12, 13.)

The same apostle who utters those terrible denunciations against the impenitent sinner, utters this consoling sentiment in behalf of those who avoid sin and strive to live according to the Spirit. "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh." (Rom. VIII; 1.) Be comforted then, my brethren, under temptation: seeing that temptation is necessary for you in order that you may approve yourselves as valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ, and may deserve to wear that crown which He has promised to every one that perseveres to the end; that we may be able to say with the apostle, "I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day." (II Tim. IV; 7, 8.)

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"I say to you that this man went down into his house justified, rather than the other." (Luke XVIII; 14.)

In the gospel of last Sunday, we were instructed as to the reverence which is due to the house of God, because it is the tabernacle of the Lord of Hosts, the dwelling-place of God with us. That house, we were told, is also the house of prayer. Our Lord resides there, not for His own sake; for His dwelling-place is the heaven of heavens, but for ours, that He might not leave us orphans; that He might carry out in our souls the great work of santification, a work which cannot be accomplished without prayer on our part. It is here in the house of God that the holy sacrifice is offered up; here the sacraments are administered; hither must we come, into the presence of our Lord to obtain whatever grace we need towards our salvation. Now, all these things necessarily imply prayer; for without prayer all these ministrations of grace will prove inefficacious in our regard. They that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth; (John IV; 24) that is to say, all the faculties of our soul must be concentrated upon the great act of worship; that we may render to God our reasonable service. (Rom. XII; 1.) We may be present in body; but, unless we pray, we may as well be absent altogether.

Moreover, we must take care to pray aright, for there is a right and a wrong way of praying. Hence,

the gospel of this Sunday comes in as an opportune supplement to that of last Sunday, in which, by a parable, our Lord instructs us how we are to pray: what dispositions we are to avoid and what to cultivate to make our prayers acceptable. What we are to avoid, then, is the example of the Pharisee.

I. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: "O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterous, as also is this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all I possess." Now, what was the fault of this prayer? It was, that he mistook altogether his position with regard to God. He came to pray, it is true; but what sort of prayer? He came, not asking God for anything. Oh no! he stood in need of nothing. He was good enough already. Now, far be it from me to underrate the value of the prayer of thanksgiving. This is a duty inculcated by our Lord. But it is one thing to thank God for His undeserved mercies towards us, and another to congratulate Him on the important service we are pleased to think that we render Him. One thing to acknowledge our own nothingness, by extolling the Divine Goodness in our regard; and another thing to exalt ourselves by comparison with others whom we deem less favoured.

What the Pharisee said may have been perfectly true, both as regards himself and the publican. No doubt he did fast every Tuesday and Thursday, like the rest of his sect; no doubt he did give tithes of everything he possessed, even of such rubbish as the

mint and anise and cumin. It is equally probable that the publican had been guilty of the enormities from which the Pharisee exonerated himself; for they were a class of men who farmed the taxes of the Roman empire. Looking at the character of the imposts of that insatiable goverment, and the kind of agents it employed, as they are described in the still extant legal records of that time; these men must have systematically practiced every kind of extortion, injustice and licentiousness, towards the unhappy victims of their rapacity. If the statement, then, of the Pharisee was true, where was his fault? Why did he go away unjustified from the presence of God? I will tell you why: it was because, though his words were true, his judgment was false.

"The sons of men are liars in the balances." (Ps. LXI; 10.) What matters it if your weights are true, when your balances are false? He altogether mistook his position towards God and towards his neighbour. Instead of seeking mercy for himself, he came to condemn others. Instead of making his virtues and good works a motive for self-humiliation, by considering how disproportionate they were to the sanctity of the God Whom he was addressing, and to the graces he had received, he made them a motive for self-justification at the expense of the poor publican. We may, indeed, feel inclined to smile at his egregious pride and self-conceit, and think ourselves incapable of such sentiments, but we must bear in mind that this parable was addressed by our Lord to us and for our instruction.

Let us, then, examine our consciences a little on this point. We come up to the temple to pray; that is to say, we come to church on Sunday to hear mass. Do we never look around to see who is there and who is not there? Do we never make unfavourable comments in our own mind on those whose presence or absence we have noticed? Do we never draw comparison between ourselves and others, unfavourable to them, flattering to ourselves? Our observations may be true enough, but we are liars in the balances nevertheless. We are as guilty as the Pharisee, and shall go away unjustified as he did. We come to the church to pray, and not to judge. Our conversation is with God alone. We come to treat with God on the supreme interests of our immortal souls; and, if we do that properly, we shall not have time to think of anything else. Oh! if we did but realize who and what we are, Who and What God is, how different would be our conduct in the house of God! Humility, my brethren, is the truth; and whatsoever is not humble, is a lie. To think of anything, when we come to pray, except our own nothingness and sinfulness, is to think a lie; and, amongst those who are for ever excluded from the kingdom of God, is every one that loveth and maketh a lie. (Apoc. XXII; 15.)

II. Let us turn now to the other side of the picture presented to us by our Lord; and let us consider what are the dispositions which make our prayers acceptable to God, as proposed to us in the example of the publican who, as we are told, was justified

through his prayer. Now, these dispositions are not far to seek: they lie on the very surface of the parable. They are humility and compunction.

Humility, the darling virtue of our Divine Lord, the characteristic virtue of a true Christian, the virtue which we are especially to copy from our Divine Example. "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. XI; 29.) It is the beginning and the end of all Christian perfection. It is through want of humility, that we make so little progress in the ways of Divine love. We cannot erect a building unless we first lay the foundations; and humility is the foundation of all holiness. Without it, all piety and fervour are mere deception. And as it is with the spiritual life generally, so is it especially with prayer. Prayer is heard and accepted in proportion as it is humble. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds; and he will not depart till the most High behold." (Ecclus. XXXV; 21.) It is because of its truthfulness, that humility is so pleasing to God. "God is high, and looketh on the low." (Ps. CXII; 5, 6.) When we come into His presence, we must abase ourselves to our proper nothingness; otherwise we outrage the Divine Majesty on His throne. How then, shall we dare to exalt ourselves above others in the Divine presence, when an infinite distance separates us all alike from God? Away then with all such comparisons; for they have no place whatever in our communication with God. True religion consists in self-abasement, after the example of Him Who,

entering into the world, debased Himself taking the form of a servant; and on leaving it, (Phil. II; 7.) He humbled Himself even unto the death of the cross. (8)

Again, the apostle St. Paul thus describes the spiritual conflict in which we are engaged: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God, unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." (II Cor. X; 4, 5.)

Pulling down, that is to say, the fortifications of our pride and self-conceit, in which we are accustomed to entrench ourselves; destroying the counsels of human prudence, in which we are accustomed to confide; and every height of self-love and self-esteem that is wont to assert itself against the infinite majesty of God. If, my brethren, you find that your prayers are not heard, that you feel no devotion in them, see if it be not through want of humility. How can we expect God to hear our prayers if, with the Church of Laodicia, we say that we are rich and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; whilst we know not that we are, in reality, wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked. And unless we open our eyes to the fact so shall we remain even to the end.

Another disposition requisite to make our prayer acceptable is compunction. Once let us ground ourselves deep in humility, and compunction will necessarily follow. The humble man must needs have a deep and abiding sense of sin, and of his own

demerits through sin. Let us, then, imitate the attitude of the publican. When we come into the presence of God, let us stand afar off by a holy fear and reverence for the sacred presence in which we stand. Let us cast our eyes to the ground in deep humility and a sense of our utter unworthiness to appear in His sight. Let us strike our breast with heartfelt compunction. If we had committed only one mortal sin in our lives, if we have stood but once over the abyss of hell, with nothing but the mercy of God to prevent us from falling into it, this one sin of itself ought to make us humble and contrite all our lives; this thought alone ought to supply fountains of tears to our eyes, and cause us to deem it too great an honour to be even an abject in the house of our God. (Ps. LXXXIII; 11.) And if we faithfully practice the lesson which this gospel teaches us, the day will come when our humility shall be transfigured into the likeness of Him Who humbled Himself, and is now therefore exalted. (Phil. IV; 8, 9.) When compunction shall be transfigured into that perfect love which casteth out fear. (I John IV; 18.) In our Father's house, there are many mansions: (John XIV; 2) and the meek and humble of heart shall possess them. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Matt. XXIII; 12.)

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of operations, but the same God, Who worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit." (I Cor. XII; 4, 7.)

In the lesson which you have heard read, my dear brethren, the apostle reminds you of the magnificent endowments of the Church of Christ to which, by God's grace, you belong. These endowments, he tells us, however manifold and diversified they may be, all come from one source—the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity. "There are," he says, "diversities of operation, but the same God," Who is the Father, and First Person of the holy Trinity. "There are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord," Who is the Son and Second Person. And "there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit," Who is the Third Person. Moreover, all these endowments are bestowed for one object: "unto profit," for the spiritual advantage of the souls of men. Let us then, my dear brethren, consider these endowments of which we have been made partakers, and for which we shall have to render an account at the day of judgment. First then, the Church of Christ is endowed by the Holy Ghost with the word of wisdom, of knowledge, with the gift of faith and of prophecy. Secondly, she is endowed, by the indwelling of the

same Spirit, with the gift of healing, the working of miracles, and the discernment of spirits.

I. In the infancy of the Church, those gifts and others which the apostle specifies, were given to the faithful individually, not all to each; but, as the apostle says, one to one and another to another; but all were given for the edification of all. As the Church increased in numbers, and established itself so firmly that these extraordinary gifts were no longer necessary for the proof of its Divine origin; these gifts were gradually withdrawn from the faithful individually, but not from the Church altogether. They were absorbed into the hierarchy of the Church, and remained as a demonstration of her magisterial authority, of that authority by which the Church is constituted our infallible guide in faith and morals.

The Church is our infallible guide in faith. For she is assisted by the Holy Spirit, Who inspires her with the word of wisdom, of knowledge, of prophecy, and interpretation of speech. By the Church is meant the Supreme Pontiff and all the Bishops in Communion with him. The Supreme Pontiff, the Bishop of Rome, is infallible, because he is the legitimate successor of him to whom the promise was made: "thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. XVI; 18.) The Bishops in communion with him are infallible because, by their union with him, they communicate in that gift of the Holy Spirit Who, it was promised, should abide with the

Church forever. Moreover, to Peter was given the commission to confirm his brethren in the faith. Such is the Church, regarded as a teaching body, possessing Divine authority to teach the revealed word of God to men, and to guide them in the way of salvation. But, obviously, we must also consider the Church from another point of view, as consisting of the rest of the faithful, whose province it is not to teach, but to be taught.

The question then arises how far they, that is the laity, are made partakers of these gifts of the Spirit, which the apostle says are given to every one unto profit. To this question, I answer that they too, are partakers of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. To them also is given the manifestation of the Spirit, unto profit. They also are infallibly guided, though not directly but indirectly, through their adhesion to their pastors. The assistance of the Holy Spirit is bestowed on the Supreme Pontiff and on the chief pastors of the Church immediately: and, through them it descends upon the body of the faithful who, by their union with their pastors, receive the communication of the word of wisdom, of knowledge, of prophecy, of interpretation of the Scriptures.

But how is this accomplished? Not by any human means, for human means are wholly inadequate, but by the gift of faith which is a manifestation of the Spirit, directly and immediately conferred on the soul of every believer. In this way are the sublime gifts of the Holy Spirit brought home to every one, even to the lowest and the most ignorant. We know

that the Church of God must ever consist chiefly of the poor and the lowly and the unlettered. For our Divine Lord thanked His heavenly Father because He had hidden the knowledge of these saving truths from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them to little ones. (Luke X; 21.) Again, our Lord declares that it is a characteristic feature of His gospel that it was preached to the poor. (Luke VII; 22.) It is, then, by the gift of faith, that they are made partakers of these sublime gifts. Thus has Almighty God provided for the salvation of all mankind. The most lowly and the most ignorant receive immediately from God the gift of Divine faith, as fully and perfectly as the most exalted and the most intellectual. In this respect, there is no difference whatever between the cultured theologians and the unlettered Christian. All alike are endowed by the Spirit of God with the gift of faith at their baptism; which gift may be increased or diminished, or even lost altogether; not, indeed, according to our natural capacity, or incapacity; but according to our correspondence with, or infidelity to, Divine grace.

By this gift of faith, the faithful are all made partakers of the sublime gifts which are bestowed on some. For those gifts are given to them for the edification of all. So that the faithful, through the gift of faith, enter into possession of all the wisdom and knowledge and prophecy with which the teaching body is endowed. Thus a simple Christian, wholly unlettered, when he makes this act of faith: "I believe whatsoever the holy Catholic Church be-

lieves and teaches," becomes a partaker of the gifts of knowledge and wisdom, which were vouchsafed to an Augustine or a Thomas, although he may be wholly ignorant of their profound researches; and may never, perhaps, hear of them until he goes to reap the reward of his act of faith, in the light of glory, where all truth shall be revealed to his eyes.

II. Again, the Church is our infallible guide in morals. Here again, by the Church is meant the teaching body, constituted as was explained to you. The pastors of the Church are divinely appointed to teach us, not only what we ought to believe, but also what we ought to do. For this end, the Church is endowed by the Holy Spirit with the gifts of wisdom and of knowledge, the discernment of spirits, the gift of healing, and the working of miracles; in order that the faithful may have a certain and infallible guide, in all the doubts and perplexities which are sure to accompany us at every step of our life's pilgrimage. "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge; and they shall seek the law at his mouth." (Mal. II; 7.) How necessary it is that these gifts of the Holy Spirit should be within every one's reach, will appear when we consider to what a state our nature has been reduced by original sin, and its fatal consequences. Our nature is blind, is lame, is liable to a thousand spiritual maladies, and to death itself. How necessary then it is for us, that we should be able to partake in these sublime gifts of healing and the working of miracles, and the discernment of spirits; whereby the Church of God, chiefly in the

sacred tribunal of penance, restores sight to the blind, opening their eyes to the light of truth; heals the lame, enabling them to walk in the way of God's commandments; gives hearing to the deaf, opening their ears to the voice of God and conscience; cleanses the soul from the foul leprosy of sin; and even restores those who are dead in sin to the life of grace.

Let us thank God, my dear brethren, for having come to the assistance of our weakness, by providing us with such a guide and physician, in the holy Catholic Church. Let us also show our gratitude by making a good use of these manifold gifts and graces, by a firm and unwavering adherence to the teaching of our pastors, and by the constant regulation of our lives and actions, in conformity with that teaching. "And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. VI; 16.)

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*And looking up to Heaven, He groaned and said to Him, Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened.*" (St. Mark VII; 34.)

Our Blessed Lord, we know, "went about doing good"—*pertransiit benefaciendo.* Wherever He went, crowds of poor people followed Him, they brought to Him those that were sick and infirm, the blind, the deaf and dumb, the halt and lame, those possessed with devils, and those even more

unhappy ones who were stricken with the scourge of leprosy. And He laid His hands on them all, and healed them. And surely these works of beneficence and mercy were very dear to Him, surely it was a joy to Him to send these poor people home cured and rejoicing. I suppose that in the few sad years of His Ministry, one of his greatest consolations was thus to help those who were in need. He ministered too, we know, to the diseases of soul and spirit as well as to those of body. He bound up the wounds of the broken-hearted. He consoled the mourner and the bereaved, "He made the widows to sing for joy." Wherever He went He brought joy with Him, strength, consolation and blessing.

And yet we read in the Gospel to-day that when He was performing one of His most beautiful acts of mercy, He was so filled with sadness that He groaned. Why was this? We ask ourselves, why did He groan the while that He was giving hearing to the deaf and speech to the dumb? The answer is not very hard to find.

(1). This poor man—whom St. Luke and St. Matthew tell us was also possessed with an evil spirit—seemed to Him, perhaps, to be a striking image of the fallen race of man—man whom He had come to save.

This poor sufferer was deaf, aye, and was not the human race deaf, too; deaf to the voice of God, deaf to the appeal of conscience, deaf to the inspirations of grace? Thus, indeed, dear brethren, were we all; born as we were in orignial sin, but by His mercy our

ears have been opened by Holy Baptism, and this spiritual deafness cured, just as Jesus cured this poor man by anointing His ears and tongue with His spittle.

There are, however, too many who have relapsed once more into this infirmity after their cure. They have fallen wilfully into grievous sin; they have persisted in sin and hardened themselves in evil, until gradually they have become altogether deaf to the divine Voice, and having refused to listen to it for so long, they have at last become altogether incapable of hearing it.

They cannot hear it whether it comes to them from outside or from within. From outside, that is to say, through the sermons or the exhortations of the priest, or of their superiors, through the warning voice of special circumstances or events permitted by God in order to wake them to a sense of their danger, through the message conveyed in books or in the Word of God itself—all alike fail to reach them, they are isolated from all these influences, aloof and solitary in their wilful infirmity.

"Hear ye deaf * * * * Who is deaf but he to whom I sent my messengers? Thou hast ears open, wilt thou not hear?"

And so it was when after sending messenger after messenger, God in the fulness of time sent His own Son into the world to save it; saying "They will reverence My Son." Even to the divine messenger were they deaf, "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears." "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

And they were deaf also to the voice that witnessed to God within the depths of their own souls, wilfully and obstinately deaf to the appeals of conscience, closing their ears the more fiercely as they felt the appeal more strong and more persistent.

(2). And they were not only deaf but dumb also. They were dumb for they were silent with regard, first, to the sins of others; being content to connive at them, to gloss them over by tacit approval, or at least to refuse to rebuke them when such rebuke was a duty. How many parents there are, even now, who are thus miserably dumb as regards the sins and errors of their own children. They see them straying from the paths of virtue and religion, and they say nothing. They are dumb, either from a shameful cowardice, or from a still more shameful indifference. They do not interfere, they say, as if that were a virtue, as if it were not their strict and grave duty to instruct their children in virtue, and to reprove and punish their faults, as if they would not have to answer for the sins of their offspring before the dreadful judgment-seat of God. So many parents are partakers of the sin of Heli, the High Priest of Israel, who, himself, a good and devout old man, allowed his sons to fall into open sin and defile even the very house of God with shameless vice, and yet, through a miserable and false feeling of affection, would not rebuke or chastise them. We know how great and exemplary a chastisement was meted out to him by the divine Justice. "I have foretold unto him," said the mysterious voice which the child Samuel

heard in the night-watches, "that I will judge his house forever, for iniquity, because he knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them. Therefore, have I sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated with victims nor offerings forever." Kings III; 13, 14.)

Again, how many Catholics are fatally and cruelly dumb, when they are thrown with non-Catholics, who do not understand nor value our holy religion. They might do so much by a few discreet words of explanation, by taking advantage of opportunities of putting forward the claims of the Church on the human soul, by defending her doctrines and practise when they are attacked by the ignorant or by the malicious. But they are dumb. They either will not take the trouble, or they are ashamed to confess their faith. And so endless opportunities of doing good are lost, and the good seed that might have fructified in many a heart, is never sown.

How shall we answer before God for the souls of our brethren, lost through our dumbness?

And then again, how many are dumb with regard to their own sins. Oh! fatal dumbness which invades even the tribunal of penance, and snatches souls away from the Precious Blood which is about to fall upon them in cleansing streams!

How many stay away from confession altogether, or what is even worse make bad and sacrilegious confessions owing to this dumb devil that possesses them!

"For when evil will be sweet in his mouth, he will

hide it under his tongue. He will spare it and will not leave it, and will hide it in his throat." This dumb devil stands by many a confessional and reaps a rich harvest there.

When we think how easy our Lord, in His mercy, has made to us the way of penance, how the humble avowal of our sin in strictest privacy, to God's ac credited minister and to him alone, is sufficient to cleanse the soul of its deepest stains, and restore it to the life of grace; how mad and worse than mad seems this dumb spirit which seals the lips of so many to their eternal and irreparable loss.

No wonder, then, that our Lord groaned, as He looked upon this man, who seemed to him a figure of the human race, in its miserable state of wilful infirmity.

(II.) Perhaps Our Lord sighed also for another reason. Perhaps He thought of the numberless sins of ear and tongue to which he would be tempted, into which he might fall, and from which his infirmity had hitherto delivered him.

Alas, how much better it would have been for many of us, if we had been born deaf and dumb!

How many and how varied are the sins of the tongue, the sins of speech and hearing! When we think of them we are bewildered by their number. Who can estimate the sins committed in one day, in one city, only by the tongue and the ears?

We see a knot of young fellows standing at the street corner and hear the coarse mirthless laugh which applauds some obscene joke. We find our-

selves in more cultured society and among people who consider themselves good Christians, and how often we are sickened—or should be—by the miserable gossip and backbiting, the shameless detraction and abuse, offspring of jealousy and envy and all uncharitableness, or even sometimes by the black slanders of calumny. The blasphemies of men who hate religion, perhaps do not wound the Sacred Heart so deeply, as the uncharitable conversation of those who profess to love it. Then, there are the lies and hypocrisies, the malicious innuendo, the impure suggestion, the scandalous story, the evil advice, the heartless jeer, the unkind interpretation, and all the host of sins which made St. James cry out against the tongue as "an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison * * * a fire, a world of iniquity" (St. James III; 5, 6.) Well then might our Saviour groan, as he unloosed this poor man's tongue. Perhaps indeed, He foresaw that this tongue and these lips would one day be used to hound their Benefactor to His death, that the voice given to him by his Saviour would cry out against that Saviour, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

"Impossible!" you will say, perhaps. "Impossible! that a man would be so dastardly and ungrateful." But there is nothing at all impossible in it. Alas! What do we do when we commit mortal sin but crucify Him again, and put Him to an open shame?

Let us offer to Him every day our ears and our tongues, as a living and reasonable sacrifice, humbly

beseeching Him to hallow them and make them His, preserving them from all evil and from all wilful sin. Then may we hope that He will not have to groan afresh over our reckless use of the faculties which His love has bestowed on us.

(Dom Bede Camm O. S. B.)

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel)

"I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand, by which also you are saved; if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain." (I Cor. XV; 1, 2.)

In the lesson which you have just heard read, the apostle exhorts the faithful to stand fast in their faith of the gospel which he had preached to them. Now, as the virtue of faith is one of the most important of all the virtues; is, in fact, the foundation of all supernatural life in the soul, we cannot do better than devote a few moments to its consideration. For the most important things, by constant familiarity, soon lose their importance in our eyes, unless from time to time we examine them attentively.

Of the importance of faith we may judge when the same apostle says of it in another place, that without it "it is impossible to please God." (Hebr. XI; 6.) What then is Faith? It is the absolute submission of our faculties, moving us to assent to all those things which have been revealed to us on Divine

authority. From this definition, the necessity of faith for salvation appears manifestly.

For being created by God for a supernatural end—that is, for an end which is beyond and above our natural capacity, it was necessary that supernatural means should be given us for the attainment of that end. That end is union with God. In order to gain that end, we must be united to God in this life, in a supernatural way, through the faculties of our soul. This union is accomplished by the three theological virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity. By Faith we arrive at the knowledge of God; by Hope we are led to confide in Him; by Charity we are moved to love Him. Now, no one can ever see God in heaven who does not depart this life in the possession of these three virtues. For the absence of any one of the three is enough to break the union between God and the soul; which union is the necessary condition of eternal union in heaven. Moreover, these three virtues must be supernatural; that is, not acquired by our own efforts but infused by God. They must be based on supernatural motives, and tend to a supernatural end. Again, of these three, faith is the foundation of the other two. Hence, there can be neither hope nor charity where there is no faith. For it is manifestly impossible for any one to hope in, or to love, one whom he does not know, and consequently in whom he does not believe.

In faith there are two things to be considered: what we believe, and why we believe it. First, as to what we believe. We believe whatsoever God

has revealed. The truths which He has revealed are chiefly those concerning Himself. His Own Divine Nature and attributes, our relations to Him, the future state, the mystery of the Incarnation with all the truths involved in it, and the means whereby we are to attain salvation. Such is the sum and substance of the articles of our faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed. Now, whence did these truths come, and how did they come to our knowledge? We could not have found them out by ourselves, for they are altogether beyond the reach of our faculties. And if we had found them, or any of them, out for ourselves, this would be knowledge and not faith, and would be of no use for our salvation. For it is of the essence of faith that we should believe on the authority of another. And it is of the essence of Divine faith that we should believe on the authority of God. These truths, then, and whatsoever other truths we believe, come from God and are revealed to us by God. But how are they revealed? In other words, how are we to know what are the things which God has revealed, in order that we may know what we are to believe? This is a most important question; for, evidently, we cannot believe anything, unless we are sure that God has spoken, and, moreover, sure what it is which He has revealed.

It is clear that Almighty God, because He is Almighty, could have made His revelation known to us in many ways. He might have made some man, or a number of men, the depositaries of His revealed truth; as, in fact, He did in the early ages of the

world, when He appointed first the Patriarchs, then the Prophets, then the High Priests to be the interpreters of His law. Or He might have visited each individual soul, illuminating it with a full knowledge of His revelation. But, as a matter of fact, He has not done so as we know by experience. Neither would it be in accordance with God's ordinary Providence, in the natural or supernatural order. Again, He might have ordered that His revealed Word should be wholly consigned to a written book; and that each one who read that book should be inspired to understand the true and full sense of what he read. But this too we know that God has not done. For, although a great part of His revealed truth is contained in the holy Scriptures, yet, on the one hand, the Scriptures do not contain the whole of revelation; nor, on the other, has God inspired each individual to understand aright what is there written.

I know not how many more theories might be imagined, and have been proposed on this subject, but it is not worth while pursuing them. And so I will answer at once, that the means which God has instituted for making known with infallible certainty what He has revealed is His infallible Church, which we know He instituted, for He speaks of it over and over again in the gospels. We also know that He made this Church infallible; that is, proof against all error; for He Himself has said as much. (Matt. XVI; 18.) Moreover, we know that this Church is and must be the Catholic Church, because she is the only Church in the world which even claims

to be the infallible Church of Christ: and because it is proved by historical evidence, that she is identically one and the same Church with that which Christ instituted and the apostles founded. The Church, then, is the organ of Divine revelation. She is the interpreter between God and man. It is from the Church that we are to learn everything that appertains to faith and piety. Hence, to refuse to hear the Church, is as grave a crime as to refuse to listen to God Himself, as our Divine Lord has Himself declared. (Luke X; 16.) But when I say that we are to learn from the Church what God has revealed, I do not mean to say that we believe on the authority of the Church, and this brings me to the next point for our consideration—the reason why we believe.

This reason or motive is the authority of God revealing: nor can it be any other. For if we believe on any less authority than this, our faith would be not divine, but human, and, therefore, unprofitable to salvation. We know what God has revealed on the authority of the Church, which God has appointed to teach us. We believe what God has revealed, because God has revealed it. Let me explain my meaning by example. A monarch sends an ambassador to a distant country. The rulers of that country know that the ambassador represents his sovereign, because he exhibits his credentials to that effect; they, moreover, are satisfied with the treaties which he negotiates, because they know that he is competent to attest the signature of the monarch

whom he represents. Hence they, in reality, treat and negotiate on the authority, not of the Ambassador, but of his sovereign, through the testimony of his Ambassador. Just in the same way we believe whatever God has revealed on the testimony of the Catholic Church, that God has so revealed it.

Faith is a vast subject, and there are many effects of it on which time would not permit me to dwell now. What I have said applies to the mere definition of faith, which may be very dry to listen to, but is very necessary to be known. There would be much to say, also, as to the qualities of divine faith, the method of exercising it, and the objects on which it is exercised. But I will conclude for the present with the exhortation of the apostle: to hold fast the faith which has been preached to you, by which also you are saved. There is hope for the most hardened sinner, if only he retains the faith. But if he loses the faith how shall he be saved then? And, my brethren, faith may be lost, and is lost, by thousands who are unfaithful to grace. If you wish, then, to keep your faith intact, as it is the most precious thing you have, prize it dearly and practice it fervently: that you may, by God's grace, fight the good fight and keep the faith, and so deserve to receive the crown of life. (II Tim. IV; 7.)

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see.*" (Luke X; 23.)

You are to consider these words of our blessed Lord as addressed to yourselves; to each one of you individually, as they are in reality. For whatsoever was written was written for our instruction. (Rom. XV; 4.) Especially are the words of our Divine Lord applicable to all time. For He has said: "the words that I have spoken to you, are Truth and Life." (Joh. VI; 64.) They are truth and therefore infallible; they are life and, therefore imperishable. The Church is the representative of our Lord upon earth. Indeed, I may say she is His impersonation. For the Church is the Body of Christ, and Christ lives in His Church. Hence, when the Church sends to us some portion of the Gospel on a Sunday, we are to listen to it with the same reverence as if Jesus Christ Himself spake to us. What then is the lesson we are to learn from this day's gospel? It is a lively sense of the great favour we have received, in living under the new dispensation which is a law of grace, of love and of liberty, as compared with the old law of fear and bondage. This again, ought to excite in us feelings of shame and confusion at our neglecting to profit by the graces we have received, and a resolute determination to avail ourselves of them with increased fervour in the future.

Let us, then, consider how much more excellent is the dispensation under which we live, than that of the old covenant. In the old dispensation no adequate revelation was made of that great fundamental mystery of the Holy Trinity, in Whose adorable Name you were all baptized, and by the profession of which faith you hope to be saved. How vague and obscure was their knowledge of the means by which their redemption was to be accomplished; of the character of the promised Messias! Add to all this the inveterate obstinacy of a carnal people, who could only be allured to the practice of virtue by temporal rewards, and deterred from vice by threats of temporal punishments, so little did they know of the interior spiritual life, and of the consolations of Divine grace. All these truths were, indeed, made known to them by various messengers of God at various times; so that the deposit of revealed truth went on increasing, until it finally culminated in the coming of our Lord. Then it was that, in the fulness of time, and, last of all in these our days, God sent His only-begotten Son; (Hebr. I; 1, 2) and, no longer by the mouths of Prophets, but face to face, God conversed with man. (Bar. III; 38.) Then was the whole revelation of Divine Truth made know to men. "The Paraclete, when He shall come, shall teach you all things." (Joh. XIV; 26.) That revelation was, henceforth, incapable of addition or diminution; for it was a testament sealed with the Blood of Christ, by Him delivered to the Church, to be handed down inviolate from generation to

generation. Truly, "blessed are the eyes that see the things which we see."

It may be objected, that we cannot partake of this blessing because we do not see nor hear what our Lord said and did nearly 1900 years ago. I reply that we are, in very truth, eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of those very things. For our Lord, though He chose not to remain with us by His visible presence, yet determined that His words and acts, which are the law by which we are governed, should abide with us for ever. To that end He established a Church which should represent Him, that is, make Him ever present to us. This Church, therefore, He endowed with all the gifts necessary for such an end; nay, He even transferred to the Church the very power and mission which He had from the Father. "All power is given to Me, in heaven and in earth; going *therefore*, teach ye all nations." (Matt. XXVIII; 18, 19.) Mark the word, "therefore." Because all power is given to Me, *therefore* I empower you to carry on My mission of converting the world. Hence, the words and the acts of Christ are rehearsed wherever and whensoever the Church exists, that is to say, all over the world, and to the end of time.

The voice of the Church is the voice of Christ. "He, that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me." (Luke X; 16.) The life of the Church is the life of Christ; that is, the acts of the Church, so far as they are the acts of that authority which Christ established to rule the Church, are the acts of Christ, and to be regarded and rever-

enced as such by us—with what docility, therefore, ought we to submit our judgments and our understanding in everything to the Church! To think with the Church; that is, as the Church thinks, should be our maxim as it was that of St. Ignatius. Once admit that the Church is the Body of Christ, having members dependent one on another, and all under the control of one head, and it becomes manifest that it would be the height of impiety not to yield our unreserved submission to that authority, without question or hesitation. Of those who do submit, it may truly be said: "blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see." For there is a way of seeing which yields no perception; and a way of hearing which is not understanding; as we learn from our Lord Himself, who says: "that seeing, they may not see; and hearing, they may not understand." (Luke VIII; 10.) Let us, then, so see and hear that we may be blessed in so doing.

In the next place, we may consider the excellence of the new dispensation in regard of the means of sanctification which it offers. The chief ordinary means of sanctification are the sacraments and the sacrifice of the Mass. The sanctification of the people of God was the end of the old law as it is of the new. "This is the Will of God, your sanctification." (I Thess. IV; 3.) This is the end for which God created man; that, being sanctified by His grace in this life, we might be worthy to enjoy Him in the life to come. Hence, the old law also had its sacraments and sacrifices to sanctify the people, but how different

from ours. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, dwells almost exclusively on this subject, and shows how weak and inefficacious were the ordinances of Moses as compared with those of Jesus Christ. In the first place, their sacraments did not, of themselves, confer grace; but were only figures of the good things to come, not containing the substance of the things. So that they who received them, were not sanctified by them, but merited according to their dispositions, to participate in the future redemption of Christ.

On the other hand, how ample and abundant are the graces of the Sacraments of the New Law. So that that saying of the Psalmist is verified "with Him is plentiful redemption." (Ps. CXXIX; 7.) They are seven channels through which the precious Blood of Christ is poured into our hearts, cleansing them from sin, sowing the good seed therein, and bringing to maturity that which is sown, making that which was barren to blossom with fruitfulness. "Wisdom hath built herself a house, she hath hewn her out seven pillars." (Prov. IX; 1.) The sacraments inwardly contain, and really confer, the grace which they outwardly signify. They are, in fact, by virtue of Christ's ordinance, the acts of Christ Himself. So that one who worthily receives a sacrament, is like that woman in the gospel who touched the hem of Christ's garment and virtue went forth from Him and healed her. Or again, the operation of the sacraments is like that action of our Lord when He approached the dead man's bier and touched it, and

immediately the dead man arose. Yet again, it is like that action of our Lord when He anointed the blind man's eyes with clay, and straightway he received his sight. Even so, the outward and visible sacramental rites have, from our Lord, a Divine virtue and efficacy to heal all our spiritual maladies; and even to restore life to the soul that is dead in sin. So that it is truly Christ Who absolves the sinner by the mouth of the priest, as it was He Who raised the dead to life. "Blessed," indeed, "are the eyes that see the things which we see."

Well might the Psalmist cry out in joyful ecstasy: "He hath not done so to every nation." (Ps. CXLVII; 20.) In that Psalm, he foresees the future glories of the Church. "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God O Sion, Who hath placed peace for thy borders, and feeds thee with the fat of wheat." (12, 14.) In these last words, he alludes to the most blessed sacrament of the holy Eucharist. It is sufficient to point to this gift of God in order to show how highly favoured we are under the new dispensation. For in giving us this gift, Divine Omnipotence has exhausted Itself. When God gives Himself to us, can He give us more? When the Author and Source of all grace gives Himself to be our food, what grace can be wanting to us except through our own fault? But let us not forget the obligations we incur in consequence. Can our eyes be blessed in the sight of this treasure, if we do not appreciate it? It is hard to say which is more astounding, the love of God, or the ingratitude of man. The one seems

to vie with the other. Let us try, then, to show ourselves truly grateful for this inestimable gift.

Again, let us consider the excellence of the new dispensation in respect of its sacrifice. The sacrifices of the old law were those of irrational creatures, which could never take away sin. (Hebr. II; XIII; 10.) Whereas, we have an altar, whereon is offered in every place a pleasing sacrifice and a pure oblation (Mal. I; 11), the Blood of the immaculate Lamb of God. How fervent, then, should be our devotion in assisting at the holy sacrifice Let us strive all we can, to feel the blessing which our Lord has pronounced on those who see the things that we see; and let us show our gratitude for these inestimable gifts and privileges, by making a good and profitable use of them. Be fervent, then, and constant, in frequenting the holy sacraments, and in assisting at holy mass, and the other sacred offices of the Church. Thus, you will truly experience in yourselves the blessing which our Lord has pronounced on those that see the things which we see, and hear the things which we hear. By so doing, we shall, with God's help, merit that still greater blessing, which our Lord will one day pronounce on those who have proved faithful; that blessed summons to enter into the joy of their Lord (Matt. XXV; 21); joy which eye hath not seen nor ear heard; which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive (I Cor. II; 9); the joy of seeing God face to Face, for ever.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God." (II Cor. III; 5.)

The words of our text naturally suggest the idea of making a few reflexions on the subject of Divine Grace; a subject of the greatest importance, because we must, all of us, say with the apostle: "By the grace of God I am what I am;" and would that we could all add with him: "and this grace in me hath not been void." (I Cor. XV; 10.) It is, then, most true that whatever we are in the sight of God in the supernatural order, we are such by the grace of God alone. Without this grace we are nothing, and worse than nothing. With His Grace we may be anything we like to aspire to. "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Phil. IV; 13.) We must admit, then, that nothing can surpass in importance the subject of grace, as far as our sanctification and salvation are concerned. And beyond this, what else is worthy of the consideration of a rational being possessing an immortal soul, the salvation of which is the only object for which he lives? By Grace is meant the friendship of God; and not only His friendship, but the very in-dwelling of God within us; according to that saying: "the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us." (Rom. V; 5.) Hence, this kind of grace is called Habitual grace,

to express its abiding presence in the soul. It is also called justifying, or sanctifying grace, to express its effect in making us the friends of God.

But there is another kind of grace which is given to men from time to time, to help them to do some good work, and this is called Actual grace. It differs from habitual or sanctifying grace (1) in not continuing or abiding in the Soul, but it is given for some definite purpose with the accomplishment of which it comes to an end; (2) it does not make the recipient holy nor a friend of God, but only enables him to do that for which it was given. It follows from this that actual grace may be, and is, given both to the just and to sinners. It is given to the just, in order that they may elicit meritorious works and become still more holy, according to that: "let him that is just be justified still, and let him that is holy be sanctified still." (Apoc. XXII; 11.) It is given to sinners, to enable them to elicit such acts as may lead to their conversion.

Let us now consider the necessity of grace. I have already, in speaking of the importance of the subject, intimated the absolute necessity of grace for the one great object of our existence, the salvation of our souls. Let us now consider this point more in detail. First, as to the necessity of habitual or sanctifying grace. The necessity of this grace as a free gift of God, is apparent from that text of St. Paul: "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin, death; and so death passed upon all men, in that all have sinned." (Rom. V; 12.) Therefore, as by

the offense of one unto all men to condemnation; so also, by the justice of One unto all men to justification of life." (18.) And "where sin abounded grace did more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, so also, grace might reign by justice unto life everlasting, through Jesus Christ, our Lord." (Rom. V; 20, 21.) We were, then, all of us, under sentence of eternal death, until our Lord took the hand writing of our condemnation and nailed it to the Cross; (Col. II; 14) thereby restoring us to our lost inheritance, of the grace of God in this life, and His glory in the next. To this necessity of grace, therefore, there is, and can be, no exception.

Again, since it is the free gift of God, it follows that we can never by any efforts of our own, obtain it. All the prayers and good works in the world can never, of themselves, make us the friends of God, unless God chooses of His Own free grace, to bestow His friendship upon us. For we are, by nature, unworthy of it; and nothing that we can do can ever make us worthy of it. "God commendeth His charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. V; 8, 9.) Now, it is important to bear this in mind, because many persons indulge in strange delusions, such as this: that because they lead what they imagine to be irreproachable lives, because they are just in their dealings, charitable to their neighbours, pure in their conduct, and so forth; therefore, they will be saved. My brethren, this is a great mistake. Your justice, your charity, your purity, your other virtues, what-

ever they may be, will never save you. It is the grace of God alone which can save you. For what does the Scripture say? And remember, that in the following text, by charity the apostle means, not what we usually mean by it, mere alms giving, but he means the sanctifying grace of God. "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing." (I Cor. XIII; 3.) "Wherefore, he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall." (I Cor. X; 12.) We shall see later on, how this grace is to be obtained.

Let us now consider the necessity of actual grace. I need not dwell long upon this point, because the necessity arises from the same cause as the necessity of habitual grace; namely, the utter inability of our natural powers to do anything that is supernatural. This is clear from the very meaning of the term. Supernatural works are all works which have reference to the sanctification of our souls, towards reinstating them in the friendship of God, or the strengthening of that friendship. But a supernatural work means a work above nature. Therefore, all the powers of our nature, however exalted and perfect they may be, could never elicit the least supernatural act. Here, again, we must guard against a mistake. I do not say we cannot naturally perform acts which are naturally good. Of course we can. Even the worst of men sometimes perform good actions. All of us have, along with much that is evil, something that is good in our natural dis-

position. And we can naturally exert those good dispositions in a good direction. But still, those works being purely natural, are absolutely worthless towards our salvation. They cannot be acceptable to God, as not being done by His grace. For the same reason they merit no reward hereafter; none whatever. As the great Doctor of grace, St. Augustine, says: God crowns His Own works in us. His own works, meaning those works which we perform by God's grace. No one shall be "crowned except he strive lawfully." (II Tim. II; 5.) By contending lawfully, St. Paul means to contend by, and with, the grace of God. Do not, therefore, harbour the delusion that because you do what seems to be good, those works are profitable to your salvation. To be of any use to that end, they must be done by the grace of God in you.

Here, let me remark by way of parenthesis, that this truth explains what otherwise seems mysterious, in the ways of Divine Providence. We see a number of worldly people who have no faith, no true sense of religion, no appreciation of spiritual things; yet nevertheless, who get on in the world and enjoy every blessing this world can give; whilst on the other hand, many who lead truly supernatural lives, yet suffer much in this world; poverty, hardship, afflictions of every kind. The explanation is very simple; those worldly people receive a natural reward for their naturally good actions; the only reward which they will ever receive. On the other hand, those who lead supernatural lives, have yet

much that is evil in them, and suffer much from the wear and tear of the conflict of the flesh against the spirit. Hence, God, Who is good, mercifully punishes, purges, purifies them in this life, that so they may be the better prepared for their supernatural reward hereafter.

Another remark which I would make is this. It concerns such as do not belong to the Catholic Church. It is the teaching of approved theologians, that as the gift of faith is the first of God's graces, so in the case of those who have not yet received the gift of faith, the actual graces which are given to them are all directed to help them to obtain this gift of faith. It follows from this that until such a one has corresponded to those graces, and yielded his understanding captive to the obedience of faith, all his works, however speciously good, are lost and worthless in the sight of God. He is in the position of those described by St. Paul, as running at an uncertainty, and beating the air. (I Cor. IX; 26.)

I will conclude with a few words on the means of obtaining God's grace. They are chiefly prayer and the holy sacraments. Considering the importance of Divine grace, resolve to make fervent and frequent use of those means. Set about the task of sanctifying your souls, with the resolution of men who have a great work to do, and are determined to do it. The grace of God is at hand for everybody, if only they will use the means which God has appointed: prayer and the holy sacraments. But for those who refuse to use these means, the hour will come when there

will be no more grace; when the patience of God will be exhausted. Work, then, whilst it is day; for "the night cometh when no man can work." (Joh. IX; 4.) To the arm of flesh, this struggle is impossible; but the grace of God makes the conflict easy, and the victory certain. Pray, then, earnestly and perseveringly, for this grace. Come often to the fountains of grace, welling forth from our Saviour's pierced Side, and flowing through the channels of the holy Sacraments. Come, and you shall find peace and "rest to your souls." (Matt. XI; 29.)

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*" (Luke XVII; 14.)

We learn from the apostle that the law of Moses was only a shadow of the good things to come, but did not contain the substance of the things. (Hebr. X; 1.) It was a law of types and figures, ordinances of divine institution it is true, and therefore, necessary for salvation; but which had no efficacy in themselves, and were only profitable so far as they were performed in the faith and hope of the future redemption, from which alone they could derive their efficacy. Then everything in the old law has its counterpart in the new; just as a shadow cannot exist without a substance to produce it. St. Paul urges this principle in its application to the sacrifices of the old and new law. He says that the tabernacle

and priesthood and sacrifices of the old law were a "parable of the times present." (Heb. IX; 9.) Now, the characteristic difference between the old and the new covenants is this, that the old law was a law of external observance, imposing external and visible sanctions; that is, rewards and punishments. It was, says St. Paul, a ministration of the flesh; (Hebr. IX; 10) not, indeed, to the exclusion of the spiritual element, for the end of the old law, as of the new, was the sanctification of the people of God: but that this spiritual element was not so conspicuous as in the new law which is essentially a spiritual covenant.

Amongst the provisions of the Mosaic law, was a code of regulations, prescribing what was to be done in case of leprosy, real or suspected. (Lev. XIII.) It was to this code that our Lord alluded when He told the lepers to go and show themselves to the priests. We see at once how this is, in the language of St. Paul, a parable of things present. What is sin but a foul leprosy, infecting the soul, polluting it, making it abhorrent in the sight of God and His angels, and contagious to those who come within its pernicious influence. Again, as leprosy differs from leprosy, some being fatal, others not so; so also, there is a sin which is unto death, and a sin which is not. But all sin, whether mortal or venial, is an offence against God, and renders the sinner displeasing in the sight of the Divine Majesty. It is a disease which, if it does not kill the soul at least weakens it, and renders it liable to some more fatal malady.

Now as in the old law, it was provided in the case of leprosy that the sufferer should show himself to the priest, that he might pronounce judgment, and prescribe the course to be adopted; so in the new law it was ordained by our Lord, that those who should unhappily become infected with the leprosy of sin should show themselves to the priests, that they might pronounce judgment, in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, and prescribe the proper remedies to be applied. Let me then, say a few words on the necessity, the utility, and the right way of making confession of our sins.

The Church represents our Lord upon earth; and the actions of the Church, that is, of its duly-appointed ministers, are really the actions of our Divine Lord, by virtue of His appointment. Moreover, it is not by any power of their own, but by that of the Holy Ghost, that the ministers of the Church act, according to that of St. Paul: "let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God;" (I Cor. IV; 1) that is, of the holy sacraments. Therefore the priest, as the dispenser of the mysteries of God, has entrusted to him, amongst other things, the power to absolve or retain the sins of the faithful under his spiritual charge. To absolve *or* retain—hence he has to exercise a discretionary power. Now, how can he decide whether to absolve or retain, unless the sin be manifested to him? Again, it is impossible in the very nature of things, that some mortal sins should be forgiven and others not; for, as St. James says:

"whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all;" (James II; 10) inasmuch as one mortal sin destroys charity which is the life of the soul. Therefore it becomes necessary that every single mortal sin should be manifested in order to obtain forgiveness of any.

Moreover, confession is an important part of that salutary discipline which makes this sacrament emphatically a Sacrament of penance. If we choose to sin, it is unreasonable to expect pardon without submitting to some penalty. When one person offends another, the offended party expects an apology at least; that is, a confession of the wrong done, from the offender. If creatures like ourselves, exact this of one another, shall we dare to refuse this amount of satisfaction to the insulted majesty of God? Again, confession is a great exercise of humility. There is no virtue more pleasing to God than humility. It is, indeed, the foundation of all true sanctity, and we ought to rejoice in every opportunity of practicing it. It is precisely because it is repugnant to nature that confession is so salutary. For our nature is corrupt, and we cannot follow our blessed Lord, unless we learn to overcome ourselves. So pleasing is this virtue of humility to Almighty God, that it quite disarms His Justice. When He beholds the penitent sinner humbling himself in the tribunal of penance, the arm of Divine vengeance, uplifted to strike, becomes powerless: the Omnipotent Himself is overcome.

What I have said as to the utility of confession,

applies equally to venial as to mortal sin, although the confession of the former is not necessary. By confessing our venial sins, we obtain advice how to avoid them, how to acquire the virtues which we stand in need of, and how to overcome our peculiar temptations. The confession of venial sins, if performed in a proper spirit, keeps alive in us a sense of the enormity of any sin, in the sight of God. For, bear in mind, that even venial sin is a greater evil than any temporal calamity whatsoever. So much so that even were it possible, it would not be lawful to commit one venial sin, in order to release all the lost souls in hell. The habit of venial sin, unrepented of and unconfessed, weakens the soul to such a degree that it soon falls into mortal sin by a kind of gravitation. "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." (Eccle. XIX; 1.) God Himself has said, that the state of lukewarmness is a state especially loathesome to Him: "because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of My Mouth." (Apoc. III; 16.) Now to remain in the habit of venial sin without seriously endeavouring to amend our lives, is the most fatal state of tepidity. Whilst, on the other hand, we cannot more effectually purpose such amendment than by the humble confession of our sins. Many persons seem to be hardly conscious of their sins. This arises from their hardness of heart. Habits of sin, even venial, harden the heart, blind the understanding, the conscience becomes callous, so that they call evil good, and good evil. The effectual remedy for

this great evil is frequent confession and good confession. This brings me to the next point for our consideration: the manner in which we ought to perform this duty.

In the first place, it is obvious that there can be no good confession, except after a thorough examination of conscience. Self-examination is a duty incumbent on all, not only as a preparation for confession, but to enable us to lead good Christian lives. "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart." (Jerem. XII; 11.) As the soil which is not ploughed and weeded becomes unprofitable; so also the soul, unless it is subjected to searching examination, and unless the noxious weeds of evil habits are eradicated, speedily becomes a desert, destitute of all good, and fruitful in all evil. After a careful examination of conscience, we then go and show ourselves to the priest. The manner in which we should confess may be explained by enumerating some of the qualities which confession ought to have.

It should be entire; that is, we must confess every mortal sin of which we are conscious, and which has not been confessed before. It must be *simple:* that is, clear and straightforward, not mixed up with unnecessary and superfluous matter, but a brief declaration of our sins, as they are in the sight of God. At the same time, we must be careful to mention whatever circumstances alter the nature of the sin; otherwise the confession would be imperfect. It must be *humble:* so that the penitent

should show by his demeanor than he is really confessing his sins, and not merely telling a tale. It must be *discreet*: that is, modestly expressed, and without compromising others more than is absolutely necessary. It must be *sincere*: that is, truthful. We must not only not conceal anything; but neither may we exaggerate our sins, or add imaginary sins: for to do so would be an outrage against the dignity of the sacrament, and draw down upon us the displeasure of God. And yet, it not unfrequently happens, chiefly through a careless habit of frequenting the sacrament without any real sorrow, or without proper examination of conscience.

Resolve then, my brethren, to fulfil this sacred duty with the utmost fervour and reverence. It may be an irksome task, but the yoke is sweet and the burden light to those who fulfil it in a truly Christian spirit of devotion: (Matt. XI; 30) and its consolations, when duly performed, far surpass the irksomeness of performing it. The true and humble confession of our sins to this minister gives great glory to God. "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and confess, and tell me what thou hast done; hide it not." (Jos. VII 19.) Let us remember in Whose presence we are. It is Jesus Christ who, by the mouth of His minister, pronounces judgement, and it is to Him we confess. Consider also the many consolations attending a right and conscientious discharge of this duty. "I said I will confess against myself, my injustice, to the Lord; and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin." (Ps. XXXI;

5.) Consider also, what a means confession is, of advancing in perfection. By it we attain a true knowledge of ourselves, a humble conviction of our own unworthiness, which is the foundation of all sanctity. By knowing our failings we are put in the way of overcoming them. By knowing our deficiences, we are disposed, by God's grace, to acquire those virtues which are wanting to us. "He hath disposed in his heart to ascend by steps. For the lawgiver shall give a blessing; they shall go from virtue to virtue." (Ps. LXXXIII; 6, 8.)

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Another Sermon. Abridged from Bourdaloue.)

"*Go show yourselves to the priests.*" (Luke XVI; 14.)

Such is the order which our Lord addresses to the ten lepers, who came to implore Him to deliver them from the shameful and fatal disease which infected them. Such also is the precept which the Church, in the Name of Jesus Christ, addresses to us in order that we may be purified from leprosy a thousand times more shameful and more dangerous, the leprosy of sin. She sends us to the priests, as to the physicians of our souls; and commands us to make known to them all our spiritual maladies. "Go show yourselves to the priests." In the ancient law, the priests had not the power to heal the leprosy; but only to pronounce upon it; to decide whether it

was healed or not: but in the new law, by the sacrament of penance, the priests, as ministers of God, are empowered to release the sinner from the bondage of his sins by the word of absolution. And yet, notwithstanding this merciful dispensation of Divine Providence, is it not deplorable to see how many sinners profit so little by this gift of God and this most salutary sacrament! Let us then, consider the utility of this most important part of the sacrament of penance, the confession of our sins. It is useful as a most efficacious means of effacing past sins, (I) because God has so ordained it; and (II) because it is in itself calculated to convert the sinner, and bring him back to the path of justice.

(I.) First, then God has willed that the remission of sin should depend on the confession of sin. O, wonderful goodness of God! cries out St. Augustine, I have but to confess what I am in order to become what I am not. How different is this divine judgment from that of men. A human tribunal can only punish crimes which are discovered; in the tribunal of penance, on the contrary, it is the sinner who hides and excuses his sin, who is condemned; whilst he who confesses it, is justified. He has but to reveal his sin and at once it disappears. He has but to become his own accuser and God ceases to be his Judge. That example of a repentant sinner, holy David, knew well the value of confession when he exclaimed: "Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from sin," for he adds, "I know my iniquity." (Ps. L; 4, 5.) But not only is confession

a remedy against sin, because it is an ordinance of God, but also by reason of its own intrinsic properties, by virtue of which it counteracts and effaces sins.

(II.) For the confession of sin accomplishes three things: 1. It humbleth the sinner; 2. It inspires him with sorrow and repentance. 3. It makes reparation for his sin. When these three things have been accomplished, what has become of the sin? It is utterly destroyed. By humbling the sinner it destroys the root of all sin which is pride; by inspiring contrition it effaces that stain which theologians call the guilt of sin; by making satisfaction it expiates the penalty due to sin. So that confession may be described as a powerful solvent in which sin entirely disappears.

1. Confession humbles the penitent. This is its great work, in which its chief virtue consists. Tertullian has given an admirable definition of penance in his usual quaint language, when he says "it is the art by which a man learns to humble himself." Now, what more effectual means of practicing this art can be imagined than the humble confession of our sins? Not in our sinfulness in general, but of our sins in particular and in detail. When we say, I have thought this, I have done that, I have allowed myself to be carried away by that passion, to be influenced by that motive, in such and such a way have I been unfaithful to my God; what is all this but an heroic exercise of that penitential discipline, the art of humbling myself?

There is nothing surprising, then, in the fact that heretics, however they may vary in their opinions, have universally agreed to abolish confession. For the spirit of error is a spirit of pride, and cannot endure the humiliation of confession; I mean of sacramental confession, as it is practiced in the Catholic Church; for the kind of confession which they pretend to make is worthless, precisely in proportion as it is wanting in pain and humiliation. The shame, then, that we naturally feel in the confession of our sins, is the most valuable element in that confession; and it would be questionable policy, on the part of any one, to attract people to confession, by toning down or mitigating that shame, except in special cases. Rather, I think, every confessor will agree, that the greatest and most frequent abuse of confession is in this, that so many sinners present themselves to confess their sins without any apparent shame whatever.

2. The second effect of confession is that it excites contrition in us; a most important consideration when we reflect that without contrition, confession, however perfect, is of no value towards the remission of sin. That confession has this effect is, I think, a matter of every one's experience. For what is contrition? Our Lord has defined it in the parable of the prodigal son. It is the entering into oneself. The sinner, when he sins, goes into a strange and far-off country; when he repents he comes back to himself. And how shall this return to oneself be better accomplished, than by the con-

fession of one's sins, the manifestation of one's interior to Christ's representative. It might be objected, that it is sufficient for this purpose to examine our conscience. But does not our experience tell us, that it is not until we open our lips in confession, that we truly realize our spiritual condition? Till then what do we know of ourselves, of our sins, of their malice? It would seem that the unsealing of the door of our lips is necessary to unlock the secret chambers of the heart; and by virtue of that sacramental act a flood of supernatural light is poured into our soul, revealing its true state. That state has been eloquently described by St. Bernard, in his 36th sermon on that text of the Canticle: "If thou know not thyself, O fairest among women." (Cant. I; 7.) This fatal ignorance, he says, must be overcome by the revelation of truth, in self-humiliation, according to that of the Psalmist: "In Thy truth, Thou hast humbled me." (Ps. CXVIII; 75.) How, he says, shall not the soul be humbled; that is to say, be truly contrite, in that true knowledge of itself, when it perceives itself laden with sins, weighed down with the burden of this mortal body, involved in worldly cares, infected with the dregs of carnal desires, blind, crooked, weak, entangled in many errors, exposed to a thousand dangers, trembling with a thousand apprehensions, distracted with a thousand difficulties, liable to endless suspicions, labouring under all sorts of necessities, prone to evil, impotent for good. Will not the soul, he asks in the words of the Psalmist, be converted in its

anguish, whilst the thorn is fastened? (Ps. XXXI; 4.) Yes, he replies, it will be converted to tears, to waiting and lamentation: it will turn to the Lord and will cry out in humility: "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." (Ps. XL; 5.) This, then, is true contrition.

Wisely, therefore, does our holy father, St. Benedict, exhort us at the first round of the ladder of perfection to shun oblivion—that fatal forgetfulness which shuts our lips in confession. How soon will the soul lose its mystic beauty! How will the gold become dim and its brilliant colour fade. (Lam. IV; 1.) So true is that which the Psalmist says: "Confession and beauty are in His Sight." (Ps. XCV; 6.) Which is thus explained by St. Augustine: Confession and beauty, these two things are inseparable. If then, thou wishest to render thyself agreeable in the sight of God, humble thyself in the confession of thy sin. Love confession, if thou aspirest to beauty.

3. In the third place, confession helps to satisfy for the punishment due to our sins. And the more painful it is, the more repugnant to our feelings, the more efficacious is it for this purpose. Since the Justice of God absolutely requires that all sin should be punished, let us joyfully submit to this penalty which the Divine Mercy has devised to meet the requirements of justice. For it is in this sacrament especially, that these words of the Psalmist are verified: "Justice and Peace have kissed." (Ps. LXXIV; 11.) Indeed, so efficacious is confession

in this respect, that St. Ambrose does not hesitate to call it the Compendium or summary of all penalties. And with reason, for it far exceeds in value all bodily mortifications. Remember that the proper punishment of sin is an eternity of pain in hell, of which the chief element is the remorse and anguish of soul, the worm which dieth not; in comparison with which the pains of sense might be regarded rather as alleviations, than aggravations. The Justice of God, then, requires that there should be in the sacramental satisfaction for sin, this element of mental anguish which, moreover, must be of life-long duration. For as long as we live in this body of sin, we are subject to this law.

How grateful, then, ought we to be to God, for having in His infinite Wisdom, devised so merciful a way of satisfying His Justice; and how eager ought we to be to avail ourselves of this most effectual means of humbling ourselves, of attaining a heart-felt sorrow for our sins, and of satisfying for them. We may be sure that the consolations which will ensue on this devout practice, will far outweigh the anguish we may have endured. "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul." (Ps. XCIII; 19.) And again: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity." (I Joh. I; 9.)

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"To Abraham were the promises made and to his seed. He said not: and to his seeds, as of many, but as of one—and to Thy Seed which is Christ." (Gal. III; 16.)

In the lesson of this Sunday, my dear brethren, we are reminded of that great mystery of God's Justice and mercy, as shown in the reprobation of the chosen people, and the election of the gentiles, in their place, to be the people of God. Abraham, the father of all the faithful, was called by God to leave his father's house and his kindred, and to follow whithersoever the Divine inspiration called him. He obeyed, and in reward of his obedience, in this and in all respects, to the Divine admonitions, God promised that He would make him the father of a great nation; and that from him should descend the Expected of all nations, the Redeemer of the world. You know how God tried the fidelity of His servant, even commanding him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, which humanly speaking, would have frustrated the promises of God in his regard. And yet he was prepared to obey even in this; and stretched forth his hand to smite his beloved child. But the angel of God stayed his hand, and declared to him that his sacrifice was accepted; and in consequence thereof, God solemnly confirmed the covenant which He had made with him.

Time rolled, on and Abraham was gathered to his

fathers. His descendants found themselves reduced to slavery in the land of Egypt. Notwithstanding, the faith of the ancient patriarchs remained firm. But when, after the long lapse of 430 years, it pleased God to deliver his people from their bondage, and to bring them into the land which had been promised to their fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey, it began to appear how unworthy were this people of the great designs which God had in their regard. They were stiff-necked and rebellious and prone to every wickedness. So great, indeed, was their iniquity that to punish them, only two out of the 600,000 men who left Egypt, entered the promised land. The rest left their bones to bleach in the wilderness. The meek exhortations of Moses and the awful punishments of the guilty, were alike thrown away upon this obstinate people. It was necessary that they should be bound under the iron yoke of a rigorous law which was given them on Mt. Sinai, in the midst of thunder and lightning, whilst dense smoke and lurid flames encircled the mountain; so that the people in their terror, cried out to Moses: "Do thou speak to us; let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die."

This law, then, was a law of servitude, a law of death, a law calculated to enforce the obedience of a stubborn and rebellious people. And yet He, Who made this law was the same God Who had made the promises to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; Who had conversed with them, Face to face; Who had dealt with them, as a father with his children.

Had God then changed? Had He repented of His promises? By no means. But those in whose favour those promises were made, had changed; their heart was corrupted and perverted. They were unworthy of being treated as children. Hence, they had to be ruled as slaves, with the iron sceptre of the law. Nevertheless, the promises of God cannot be made void; and since His own chosen people had found themselves unworthy of them, another nation, more according to God's heart, was being silently prepared to be the inheritors of the promises. When the false prophet, Balaam, was summoned to curse the Israelites, he was moved by the Spirit of God, against his will, to pronounce a blessing. "I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not now. A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel. Out of Jacob, shall He come, that shall rule and shall destroy the remains of the city." (Num. XXIV; 17, 19.) But though the star should arise from Jacob, it was destined to shine, not upon the children of Israel, but upon the gentiles. "They shall come in galleys from Italy, they shall overcome the Assyrians, and shall waste the Hebrews." (Num. XXIV; 24.)

Hence, the old law is to be regarded, not so much as a confirmation of the promises made to Abraham, but rather as a sign of the reprobation of that people, as assuming that they were unworthy of the promises. "It was set because of transgressions." (Gal. III; 19.) It was ordained to keep them in subjection

and fear until the fulness of time should come when He should arise, in Whom all nations of the earth should be blessed. Hence, the law of Moses was only provisional and temporary. It was binding only on the children of Israel: it was to endure only until the coming of our Lord, Who put an end to the old law of servitude and fear, and established a new law of life, of grace, of liberty and love. How grateful ought we to be that God has reserved us for this new dispensation! But let us not be content with mere gratitude; let us also make diligent use of the abundant graces of the new dispensation. "The law was given to Moses: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (Joh. I; 17.) Let us, then, consider what important differences there are between the two covenants.

1. Who was the mediator of the old Testament? It was a man, Moses, who was appointed by God to this office. True, he was the meekest of men; but, after all, he was but a man, whereas the Mediator of the new Testament is the God-man, Christ Jesus. No doubt Almighty God seemed to respect, so to speak, the character of mediator which He had conferred on Moses. Then, when the people were worshipping the golden calf, God said to man: "Let Me alone: that My wrath may be kindled against them and that I may destroy them." (Exod. XXXII; 10.) But Moses besought the Lord: and God was appeased from doing the evil which He had spoken against His people. But, after all, how much more efficacious is the Mediatorship of our Lord Jesus

Christ, Whose precious Blood is constantly offered up in atonement for our sins: Who always lives, making intercession on our behalf. (Hebr. VII; 25.) For it was fitting that we should have such a high-priest, Who "hath obtained a better ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better Testament, which is established on better promises." (Hebr. VIII; 6.) He is our Mediator, over Whom the heavens opened; and a voice was heard saying: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased: hear ye Him." (Matt. XVII; 5.) He is our Mediator Who, being Man, has compassion on our infirmities; (Hebr. IV; 15) and, being God, is able by our oblation of Himself, to make perfect for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebr. X; 14.)

Again, my dear brethren, let us compare the two covenants in respect of their rites and ordinances. The old law had its sacrifices of oxen, of goats and such like. What were these in comparison with the sacrifice of the new law, in which the Blood of the immaculate Lamb of God is mystically shed? Hence, the prophet says: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not: holocausts for sin did not please Thee." (Hebr. X; 5, 6.) For, "it is impossible, that, with the blood of oxen and goats, sins should be taken away." (4) "Then said I: 'behold I come.'" (9) The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity took a human Body in order that He might offer it up a pleasing and perfect sacrifice to His Father.

Moreover, what was the tabernacle of the old Testament, compared with that of the new? This

latter contains the true manna coming down from heaven, which is to be our food and sustenance during our journey through the desert of this life. What were their ablutions and washings of the flesh compared with that salutary bath of penance in which the sinner, however heinous his sins may, if he is rightly disposed, be washed clean from his filthiness, and receive once more the white robe of innocence and grace.

But, my brethren, if it is our privilege to live under the law of grace, and to be inheritors of such glorious promises, remember that to whom much is given from him much will be required. (Luke XII; 48.) As you have received so many more efficacious helps to your sanctification than the people under the old law, you will have to undergo a much more rigorous judgment than they. Moreover, if God dealt so severly with those who despised the ordinances of the old Testament, such as they were, how will He deal with those who despise the great and awful mysteries of the new law—the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the blessed sacrament of the altar, and the other holy sacraments and ordinances of religion? For, "the earth that drinketh in the rain, which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth blessing from God: but that which bringeth forth thorns and briars, is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burned." But, continues the apostle, "my dearly beloved, we trust better things of you, and nearer to salvation." (Hebr. VI; 7, 9.)

Resolve, then, my dear brethren, to walk more worthily of the high vocation to which you have been called. (Eph. IV; 1.) It has pleased Almighty God to endow you, in preference to so many others, with the riches of the glory of this sacrament, with the treasure of divine faith, and all that it contains. (Col. I; 27.) What confusion to us, if we appear empty-handed at the bar of Divine justice! The light of God's countenance shines full upon us, it illumines our path, so that we may say with St. Laurence,"My night knoweth no darkness; but all things are radiant with light." If such be the case, how can we stoop to do the deeds of darkness? (Rom. XIII; 12.) The boundless ocean of love, pent up in the human heart of the Incarnate Word, encompasses us in its illimitable depths; shall we, in our folly, seek to quench our thirst at the muddy springs of earthly desires and gratifications? O ye sons of men! why do you love vanity, and seek after lying? (Ps. IV; 3.) If we did but know the gift of God! (Joh. IV; 10.) Let us, then, learn to value this gift at its true worth, that it may be the means of uniting us inseparably to the Divine Giver, Who will be Himself our reward exceeding great. (Gen. XV; 1.)

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"Seek ye, therefore, first the Kingdom of God and His Justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. VI; 33.)

In the gospel of this Sunday, my dear brethren, our blessed Lord teaches us an important lesson, which is, indeed, one of the fundamental truths of religion—the end for which we were created. The Psalmist says: "He made us, and not we ourselves." (Ps. XCIX; 3.) "In His hands are all the ends of the earth." (Ps. XCIV; 4.) Who made us? God, of Whom it is written: "There is one most high Creator Almighty, and a powerful King, and greatly to be feared, Who sitteth upon His throne, and is the God of dominion." (Eccle. I; 8.) God, Who exists from all eternity, immense and infinite in all perfections: Who alone exists; because, in comparison with Him, all other things are as if they were not. Hence, the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses was Jehovah—I am Who I am: because He alone is the self-sufficient Being, Who fills all things with His presence, and causes all things to exist by His mere Will. God made whom? He made us what we are, we know, my brethren, and, alas! for how many of us, a very sad experience tells us what we are. And yet, we only know in part the depth of our own nothingness. And now we come to the all-important question:

Why did God make us? The answer is familiar to you; but how few really understand what is im-

plied in that answer of catechism, and order their lives in accordance therewith! God made us for Himself. Indeed, He could not have made man for any other end. When He created man with a rational and immortal soul, and endowed that soul with the faculties of understanding, affections and free will, the end, which God necessarily had in view, was that man should employ his understanding in knowing God; his affections in loving Him; and his will in choosing those things which should be pleasing to Him, and conducive towards the end of his creation. "Fear God, and keep His commandments," says the wise man, "for this is all man." (Eccl. XII; 13.) When a man has done this, he has done all that he has to do. This done, he is supremely happy, whatever may be his circumstances in this world, whatever may be the pains and losses and trials which he may undergo. But, if he neglects that one thing which is alone necessary, then, however flourishing or happy his condition may appear, yet is that man to be accounted supremely miserable, because he has missed just the one object for which he was created.

The commandments which we are to keep have been thus summed up by our Divine Lord: "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself." (Luke X; 27.) It is still the same truth which is here presented to us. There is no portion of our being, not an energy or faculty of body or soul, which

does not belong entirely and solely to God. And to devote them to any other purpose, is to do violence to them, and to run counter to the purposes of Divine Providence. It is to forfeit all those rewards which have been promised to the right use of our faculties, and of the creatures with which God has surrounded us. But, let us rightly understand this question; lest, through misunderstanding the words of our Lord, we should despair of being able to obey them. When we are told that we have but one thing to do in this world—to serve God, and so prepare ourselves for the eternal possession of Him hereafter; and that every action of ours which is not directed to this end is a perversion of God's gifts—it is not meant that we should cease to occupy ourselves with the things of this world, for that is impossible; but, rather, in the words of the apostle, that we should "use this world as though we used it not." (I Cor. VII; 31.) that we should not place our happiness in the acquisition, or enjoyment, of the things of this world; but only seek them, or use them, so far as they are conducive to our spiritual welfare.

Hence, our Lord says: "Seek *first* the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God is twofold. There is the kingdom where God reigns with His saints in heaven: and there is the kingdom over which Jesus Christ rules upon earth—that is, the Church. Now, the only means of reaching the kingdom of heaven is by belonging to the kingdom of the Church, which Christ established to lead us thither. But, my brethren, it is not enough to seek the Church, the King-

dom of God, unless we also seek His justice: that is to say, the sanctifying grace which the Church dispenses to her children. There are many who profess that they belong to the Church who have been made subjects of the Kingdom of God by baptism; but, unhappily, they have no share in her justice, because they will not approach the Sacraments to receive the benefits of our Lord's redemption. Those, therefore, who are outside the fold of the Church, must first and before all things else, seek the Kingdom of God, the true Church, regardless of all worldly and temporal interests. Whilst they who are already included in that fold, must actively and earnestly seek —and seek in the first place, the graces which the Church has it in her power to bestow.

Observe, moreover, that this is not a vain search, as is that of worldlings, who seek their satisfaction in the things of this world, and seek it in vain. For the world is a hard taskmaster, and when you have laboured in its service, what is the result? "I saw in all things vanity and vexation of spirit." On the other hand, they who seek God's justice shall not be disappointed. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you." (Matt. VII; 7.) When our Lord himself bids us seek, it would be blasphemy to doubt His power or will to satisfy us, if only we seek aright—that is, with sufficient earnestness, and seek it first and foremost, before all the things of this world, after which the irreligious seek.

Who are those who do not seek? They are those

who do not pray, who do not approach the sacraments, who when they are invited to that banquet which our Lord has spread for them begin to make all sorts of excuses. Those, who whilst they profess to be Christians, will not go a short distance to be present at Mass, or to receive holy Communion; whilst they would travel ten times the distance for some paltry temporal advantage, or even amusement. They are those Catholic parents who, after bringing children into the world, become their murderers, by not providing them with religious instruction, by not sending them to school and Church; or, what is worse, by sending them to non-Catholic schools, where they are robbed of their most precious treasure, the gift of faith. And all for what? For a mere whim, for the most paltry pretexts, for some imaginary superiority of education, or for some temporal advantage, which can never profit them anything in the next world. To all such as these, our Lord says: "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and His Justice."

"And all of these things shall be added unto you."

My brethren, if it were quite certain that by practicing our religion we should, like the early martyr, suffer torments and death—if by being faithful to our obligations, we had nothing but misery and destitution to look forward to in this world, why then, I say, no one in his senses could for a moment hesitate which course to pursue. For after all, what is it but a question between the body and the soul; between God and the world; between

time and eternity? What are all the joys and miseries of this life compared with the joys and miseries of the life to come? But, as a matter of fact, it is not so. God has promised that if we are faithful to Him we shall not be the losers, even in this world, by any sacrifice we may make for Him. "Amen, I say to you, there is no man that hath left home or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in this present time; and in the world to come, life everlasting." (Luke XVIII; 29, 30.) "O ye of little faith, why are you fearful?" (Matt. VIII; 26.)

It has never been known that anyone who was faithful to God in spiritual duties was abandoned by Him in temporal things. But if we are faithless to Him, it is only just that He should abandon us. Therefore, he is indeed a wise and prudent man, who seeks first the Kingdom of God and His Justice, leaving the rest to God's Providence, which never fails. For we know that "all things work together unto good on behalf of the elect." (Rom. VIII; 28.) "Labour not," then, "for the meat which perisheth; but for that which endureth until life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you." (Joh. VI; 27.) Our Lord even condescends to encourage our confidence in His Providence, by appealing to that Providence, as it is exerted on behalf of irrational creatures. If God takes such care of these creatures, which were made only for our use, will He not have much more care of us? "The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord, and Thou givest them meat in due

season. Thou openest Thy Hand and fillest with blessing every living creature. The Lord is just in all His ways and holy in all His works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will do the will of them that fear Him; and He will hear their prayer and save them. The Lord keepeth all them that love Him; but the wicked He will destroy." (Ps. CXLIV, 15, 20.) The conclusion then is, that if we cast our care upon the Lord He will sustain us. (Ps. LIV; 23.) If we are faithful to Him He will be mindful of us. But we must seek first the Kingdom of God and His Justice. We must, before all things else, practice our religious duties, and all that we want shall be added unto us. Added unto us—because temporal things are not to be our recompense, but only an *addition*. Our true reward shall be the fruition of that heavenly bliss, which is happiness unalloyed—the enjoyment of all good without any admixture of evil according to that: "they that seek the Lord, shall not be deprived of any good." (Ps. XXXIII; 11.)

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Another Sermon. Abridged from Bourdaloue.)

"*No man can serve two masters.*" (Matt. VI; 24.)

These are the words of eternal truth; and even without a divine revelation, reason alone would convince us that it is impossible to combine together

the service of two masters who are mutually opposed to each other; who have not only different interests, but interests diametrically opposed to each other. For, as St. Paul said to the Corinthians, "What participation hath justice with injustice, or what fellowship hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with the evil one?" (II Cor. VI; 14, 15.) For this reason, many have renounced the world altogether; fled into the desert and spent the remainder of their life in entire separation from the world. If they did so, it was not, assuredly, because the world had no attractions for them. How many of them, before their retirement, occupied a distinguished place in the world. How many were nursed in the lap of luxury, revelled in the pleasures and honours which rank and influence could procure them; and yet have renounced all these things because they were convinced that they could not, at the same time, serve God and the world. If, my brethren, you are but prepared to follow their heroic example, by renouncing the world altogether, surely, at the very least, you ought to take some precautions that you be not so much absorbed and dissipated by the service of the world as to forget or neglect the service of God. This is the point to which I request your devout attention on this occasion.

A Christian, who is in earnest about his salvation will, if it is possible, take care to retire from the world, from time to time, in order that he may attend to the interests of his soul, the only interests which are really worth considering. This occa-

sional retirement is necessary in order to remedy the havoc which is wrought in our soul by worldly conversation. And yet how few are there who manifest even this small amount of solicitude for their soul's welfare? Were I to urge this occasional retirement from the world upon you, you would no doubt plead that the thing is impossible. You are so much occupied with worldly affairs that you cannot extricate yourself from them. I wish, then, to convince you that this pretext is destitute of any solid ground; that worldly cares and occupations can never dispense a Christian from the obligation of occasionally retiring from the world with its dissipation, and of devoting a certain space of time to the sole care of our eternal salvation.

Like the Israelites of old, who were a type and figure of ourselves, we must from time to time, go out of Egypt to sacrifice to God in the desert. (Exod. V; 1.) We cannot, it is true, go out of the world, but we can at least withdraw ourselves from worldly dissipation. We have, all of us, cause to say with our blessed Lord, when He was found in the temple: "I must be about my father's business." (Luke II; 49.) For as Christians, we are bound to apply ourselves first and chiefly to the service of God and the care of our salvation. On the truth of this maxim all are agreed, and our own experience must, long since, have convinced us of it. Nevertheless, human prudence and worldly wisdom think they have a right to put obstacles in the way in the shape of worldly cares and business. They pretend

that is is impossible to reconcile our duties in the world with that spirit of recollection and retirement which the care of our salvation demands of us. To meet this objection, we must have recourse to the teaching of faith. I ask, then, can the care of that which is useless and superfluous ever excuse our neglect of that which is essential? Can our attention to what is after all, only an accessory, ever justify our neglect of that which is principal? Surely, common sense teaches us how unreasonable is such a course.

Such, too, is the lesson conveyed by our Lord to Martha, in those simple but touching words: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things." (Luke X; 41.) You worry yourself with a multiplicity of cares. But in all this bustle and turmoil, by which you think to render Me a service, you are the victim of a great delusion. Instead of the one thing, which alone is necessary, you imagine all sorts of things. This is where you are mistaken; and for the sake of these unnecessary things, you neglect that which is necessary. Hence, the confusion and embarrassment in which you find yourself placed. Instead of attending *to* Me, you worry yourself *about* Me. I am come to give you a taste of the delights of heaven, and you trouble yourself, quite unnecessarily, to prepare for Me earthly and perishable food. Striving to render Me a service you forget both Me and yourself. Such conduct is unreasonable; and you lose without thinking of it, both the merit and fruit of your activity,

through the distractions caused by your occupation. Such is the paraphrase which the Fathers of the Church give us of this passage: "Thou art anxious and troubled about many things."

Jesus Christ says to us: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His Justice." And we reply that we must first satisfy our duties to the world; that the Kingdom of God must get its dues as best it can. I know we do not say so in so many words, for that would be too shocking. But this is really what our practical conduct amounts to. Otherwise, why that assiduity, that activity, that enthusiasm, with which we engage in everything that concerns our temporal welfare; why, on the other hand, the heaviness, the disgust, the remissness, which we manifest, whenever it is a question of doing anything for our spiritual interests? Why, I say, is this the case, if we do not start from a false principle, if the interests of the soul are not kept subordinate to those of the world? What can be more unreasonable than to pretend to justify one's estrangement from God and neglect of spiritual duties, by the busy and distracted life which we allege we are compelled to lead in the world. To such as these, I say; you allege that you are overwhelmed with worldly cares, which hinder you from devoting any time to the care of your soul. I answer that the very excuse you allege is your greatest condemnation. For in the gospel that has been read to you, our Divine Lord distinctly forbids all such worldly preoccupations as would interfere with the care of our salvation.

Listen to the admonition which St. Bernard addressed to Pope Eugenius III. The Saint was afraid lest the Pope, in the midst of the cares and labours incidental to the government of the universal Church, might neglect the care of his own soul. Accordingly he makes bold to warm him of the danger, and says: "I know you deplore the circumstances in which you are placed. But it is idle to deplore unless you strive to mend. I am aware that this state of things tries your patience, but God forbid that I should approve of your patience in this respect." For sometimes patience is out of place; and it is only a delusion to think that, by surrendering ourself blindly to the world and neglecting the care of one's soul, one would gain the merit of patience. For, 'patience hath a perfect work' (James I; 4), and belongs only to the just. What remedy, then, are we to use against this evil? We must, says St. Bernard, if necessary, use the most violent means to emancipate ourselves from this slavery. In whatever state of life God has placed you, instead of being a slave to business, make yourself its master by the domination of an enlightened conscience conformed to the will of God."

The saint who uttered this warning was one who was burdened with a multiplicity of cares, a thousand times more heavy and numerous than those which burden any of you. For he guided the destinies of Christendom. Is it not then a subject of confusion to us to see how this great man, overwhelmed with cares, nevertheless kept his mind and heart in a state

of profound peace; whilst we, with our little occupations, are in a constant worry. An interior calm accompanied him whithersoever he went; we are always in a whirlpool of excitement. In the midst of his occupations his heart was ever fixed upon God; whilst we, whenever we have to discharge any religious duty, have first to go in search of ourselves and find the greatest difficulty in chaining down our distracted and dissipated minds. This sad state of things, I repeat, is no excuse for us. It is rather an additional count which will appear in the indictment of our condemnation. Say not, then, that the circumstances in which you are placed, hinder you from giving proper attention to your spiritual duties. For even admitting that such were the case, how could anyone hestitate as to the choice he would make? How could anyone in his senses, sacrifice the interests of his immortal soul to any other consideration whatsoever? If then, my occupations really hinder my service of God, unquestionably I must renounce them at all cost. But is it so? It is only our spiritual slothfulness and cowardice which makes us think so. We do not allow our business occupations to hinder us from taking a holiday at the sea-side or elsewhere; from indulging in the amusements and pastimes of the world. How many hours do we waste in reading newspapers and novels, and in unprofitable conversation?

I can only then repeat what I said in the beginning, if we were really in earnest about our salvation, we should never be wanting in the opportunity of de-

voting ourselves to that all-important work. Do not, then, lay the blame on circumstances, but on yourselves. If your occupations are frivolous, put an end to them; if they are necessary, reduce them to a systematic order, so that you may have time for your religious duties. If your spiritual and worldly interests clash, instantly sacrifice these rather than those. And in all your works, remember your last end—the end for which God made you. (Eccle. VII; 40.) Remember the words of Divine Wisdom: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. XVI; 26.)

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson)

"*They who do such things shall not obtain the Kingdom of God.*" (Gal. V; 21.)

Amongst the works of the flesh which, according to the apostle, will exclude forever those who are guilty of them, from the kingdom of heaven, he enumerates drunkenness. Again, one of the seven deadly sins is gluttony, of which excess in drinking is the commonest form. These seven deadly sins are called capital vices, because they are the roots and sources of all sin; and there is no sin which we

can commit which may not be traced to one or other of these sources. On the other hand, one of the four cardinal virtues is Temperance. They are called cardinal virtues, because just as a door turns upon its hinges so does our whole moral conduct turn upon the practice of these four virtues, one of which is Temperance, the chief object of which is to moderate the gratification of the sensual appetite.

Such being the case, my dear brethren, I should hardly be doing my duty, if I did not occasionally call your attention to this subject. Hence, I take the opportunity of the apostolic instruction which you have heard in this Sunday's lesson, to dwell for a few moments on this subject: and I do so the more readily for the sake of that noble band of men and women who have bound themselves by a solemn promise to the practice of temperance in one of its most essential particulars: I mean the pledge of total abstinence from intoxicating drink. I should also like to set this matter in its true light, before those who are not so pledged, as much misconception seems to prevail on the subject. How those who sneer at the cause of total abstinence, and strive to impede its progress, shall escape the imputation of doing the devil's work, and hindering the Holy Spirit, I know not. I should not like to share their responsibility. But, undoubtedly, it is a common mistake to suppose that this cause of total abstinence is one external to religion and piety; and that one may be both pious and religious, without feeling any sympathy for this movement. I say, this is a great

mistake; for true piety and religion must necessarily sympathize with everything that is calculated to promote the glory of God and the good of souls; whilst the absence of that sympathy and, much more, a manifestation of hostility, would evince a corresponding absence or defect of piety and religion; unless it springs, as I believe it does, for the most part, from ignorance. It is in order to dispel this ignorance that I wish to say a few words on this subject.

First, then, let me explain that it is not my intention to insist on every one taking the pledge of total abstinence. I would, indeed, counsel every one to do so. There is no one, of whatever sex, or age, or state of life, whether young or old, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, who would not derive much spiritual benefit from the observance of this pledge. But, except in certain cases, I do not say that any one is bound to take it. I say, except in certain cases; for, assuredly, there are cases where persons would be strictly bound to take the pledge; and those cases, unhappily, are far from being few in number. For one of the most stringent rules of morality, taught by the Catholic Church, prescribes that we must shun the occasion of sin! If then drink be to any one an occasion of sin, he is bound to cut off that occasion. "If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off; if thine eye scandalize thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to go maimed and blind into eternal life than, with two hands and two eyes, to be cast into everlasting fire." (Matt. XVIII; 8, 9.)

Again, my brethren, there is such a law as that of fraternal charity. And there are cases where we are bound to do this or that for the edification of our brethren which, otherwise, we should not be bound to do. It is impossible to define the limits of this duty generally; it is for each one to determine with the director of his conscience what is the extent of his obligations in this respect. With these very important exceptions, while I do not insist on total abstinence for all, yet I counsel it for all; and I claim for it, on the part of all, not only forbearance, but active sympathy: and why? Because, as I intimated before, it is an eminently religious work, calculated to promote the glory of God and the good of souls. No one is bound to take religious vows, and become a Monk or Nun. But if any one were to sneer at or depreciate religious orders, and those who belong to them, we should at once, and justly, put such a one down as a bad Catholic.

Now, the cause of total abstinence is in just the same position. The League of the Cross is not a religious order, it is true; and its members do not take a vow. But they are a Society enrolled under religious sanctions, under the banner of the cross, to do battle against a soul-destroying vice which, perhaps more than any other vice, thwarts the action of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of men, empties our Churches, leaves the altar of God desolate, dishonours His holy Name, defaces the Divine image in the soul and body of man, fills the world with misery, and hell with innumerable souls. They have

bound themselves by a solemn promise to exhibit to the world an example of self-denial and mortification which the world, engrossed as it is in self-indulgence, stands very much in need of. They walk in the Footsteps of Him who, when He thirsted through the consuming agony of His crucified members, was drenched with vinegar and gall.

I said just now that the total abstinence League of the Cross is not a religious order. Nevertheless, in its motive and constitution it approaches the character of a religious order. In fact it might almost be compared to those religious societies called of the Third Order; which devout servants of God have at various times instituted to enable men and women living in the world, to attain to greater perfection of holiness. For what is the scope of this society if not the carrying on of the great work which St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Simon Stock, St. Philip Neri, and other great saints proposed to themselves. Who, not content with founding their religious orders in which men and women might separate themselves from the world, consecrate themselves to God, and serve Him under vows in the way of perfection: not content, I say, with this, since all did not feel themselves called to so high a vocation, they went forth into the world to enlist under their banner men and wonen of the world, to serve God in the world more perfectly, and to practice according to their state of life and ability, poverty, chastity, obedience, temperance and the spirit of prayer and penance. This is the meaning of the Third Order of St.

Dominic, of St. Francis, of the Sodality of the Scapular, of the little Oratory, and of other similar pious institutions which the saints, inspired by God, have founded. And such, and no other, is the scope and object of the total abstinence League of the Cross.

No doubt it involves much self-denial; but the hardship is grossly exaggerated by an imagination wrought on by self-indulgence. But what could be its worth if there were no hardships involved in it? "The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." (Matt. XI; 12.) The way to heaven is strewn, not with roses, but with thorns. The Society is called the League of the Cross; the Cross is its motto, its standard, its guide.

I have refrained, my dear brethren, from saying anything on the horrible and degrading vice of drunkenness; for those who most need admonition on this point are not to be reached by any words from this pulpit. But I have rather sought to enlist your sympathies for that Society, which was founded for the suppression of that vice; to induce you to enroll yourselves amongst its members, as well for your own spiritual benefit, as for the edification of your brethren; and also, to encourage those who already belong to it; to give them a higher and nobler view of its aim and object; and so to enable them to fulfill its duties in a loftier and more religious spirit. In this, as in everything else, all depends on the intention and motive. One who takes the pledge from a low and sordid motive, will derive but low and sordid benefits from it. But one who takes it from a supernatural motive, and carries it out with supernatural

zeal and fervour will thereby give glory to God, and lay up a store of great merit against the great accounting-day. That sacred pledge will be a shield against temptation, against all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. (Eph. VI; 16.) It will obtain for him a constant influx of grace, by means of which he will grow in the practice of all virtues; and, especially, it will be crowned as a perpetual act of temperance. For every one who is faithful to his pledge is really, every moment, practicing an act of temperance; and such a one shall receive an accumulated reward; a reward such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man," to conceive. (I Cor. II; 9.)

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Another Sermon. Abridged from Bourdaloue.)

"Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. V; 16.)

In this Sunday's Gospel we are taught to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice," and the consequent duty of never permitting worldly cares and occupations to interfere with the service of God. Such is the plain and simple duty of every Christian; and would be our duty, even if our hearts had never been corrupted and perverted by commerce with the world. But, unhappily, how few are they who have not suffered this corruption and perversion! In such a case, when the heart has already succumbed

to the influence of the world, and has become perverted in consequence, then the duty of shunning the world becomes much more stringent and imperative. This is the point to which I invite your devout attention on this occasion. The world is full of danger, and we are weak. Hence, it is absolutely necessary that we should shun the society of the world, and renounce it forever, as soon as we perceive that it is perverting us, as soon as we feel the first symptoms of its corrupting influence.

No one, I suppose, will question the danger which is incurred from the society of the world. Ought we not then, in common prudence, to shun the danger as much as possible? We must avoid the fire, if we do not wish to be scorched by the flames: and so, too, by a wise and timely flight, we shall place ourselves out of the reach of the poisoned shafts of worldly conversation. For this reason, Almighty God expressly forbade the chosen people to associate with foreign tribes, or to make any alliances with idolators because of the danger which the Israelites would thereby incur, of falling into the like superstitions, to which they were already far too prone. God foresaw that if this carnal people began to associate with aliens, they would not fail to adopt their sentiments, and even their worship. Hence, they were strictly forbidden to have any intercourse with them. In the same way God acted towards Lot, when He wished to save him from the conflagration of Sodom. He sent an angel to lead him out of the condemned city, that he might save himself in the mountains. (Gen. XIX; 17.)

The same precaution must be taken by us. For as long as we have this resource of flight and neglect to use it, we are responsible for the consequences. If we think that God will save us in some extraordinary way, promising ourselves that He will favour us with a special protection, this would be to build our hopes upon a miracle; whilst the mere fact of expecting a miracle shows that we are unworthy of it when, without a miracle we have at hand an ordinary resource, which it only depends upon ourselves to avail ourselves of. God certainly wishes to help you in the separation which you must make with the world. For that end, He is certainly willing to inspire you, to assist you, to strengthen you. But then when He has done all that His Providence and Goodness can suggest, He leaves you, as it were, to yourself. He charges you with the responsibility of your own salvation—He says to you, as the Angel said to Lot, when he had led him to the foot of the mountain which was to be his place of refuge: 'Save thy soul.' Save yourselves now: leave the world. You see the danger. Here is a way by which you may escape. Take this road which is open to you, for there is no other.

When, therefore, we hear any one say, as we sometimes do: 'I cannot save my soul in the world: there are too many temptations: with my temperament and disposition, it is next to impossible to preserve my innocence:' is not this tantamount to saying: "I must then forsake the world: whatever ties bind me to the world, I am bound to break them." And why?

Because the preservation of one's innocence, the putting one's soul out of danger, the care of one's salvation, is our first business; and that, which is first, ought to have the preference over all the rest, in the same way, because life is the first of all natural blessings. When that is in jeopardy, to what extremities will one not go in order to save it? What are we not ready to renounce and forego for its sake? Take as an example a merchant. Let him be ever so eager after wealth. Let us suppose that he has gathered, beyond the seas, treasures which have cost him untold fatigue and anxiety. Nevertheless, when, on his voyage home, he finds himself exposed to the fury of the tempest, he will cast away all his riches and abandon them to the mercy of the waves, in order to lighten the ship in which he is sailing, and so escape the danger of shipwreck. How much more, then, ought the Christian to sacrifice everything rather than imperil his immortal soul!

But you may say: I am resolved to be firm and to resist these temptations. You say so, and perhaps you think so. But I say it is a delusion, and that such resolutions are ineffectual. For if you really wished in good faith, to overcome the world, and if, after having well weighed the importance of not allowing yourself to be corrupted by its influence, you were sincerely determined to resist all its attacks; then, I say, you would no longer hesitate to fly from it since you cannot be ignorant that flight is the safest remedy, the strongest bulwark which you can raise against the enemy. Moreover, your

resolution is ineffectual, for it will break down when it comes to the trial, as your past experience will suffice to convince you. How often has it happened that the first temptation scattered to the winds all the resolutions you had framed! The world will always be as seductive as it has been in the past, and you will always be as weak in resisting it as you have hitherto proved.

What are these dangers to which we are exposed in the world? I know there are some which we cannot escape. Others there are which we are not bound to avoid without an evident and extreme necessity. With regard to these, we may indeed, trust in the Providence and grace of God, which is never wanting to a soul that acts up to its vocation, and that never omits any of the precautions of which it can avail itself. For such a soul, God would work miracles rather that permit it to be lost. But there are other dangers which are not of this character, which are, by no means, inevitable; dangers arising from our own passions, from ambition, from curiosity, from sensuality, from worldliness. Take, for example, these frequent visits which you pay to such and such persons, in such and such houses; those social gatherings which you frequent so regularly, and where you waste so much of your time; those pleasure parties and card-parties, and what not, which are the chief occupation of your life; those frivolous conversations, at which you listen, at your neighbour's expense, to all the world's gossip; where you learn from others what you ought not to know. Time

would fail me to enumerate all the dangers to which we daily and hourly expose ourselves in the world.

But you will say if I am to give up all these things, what will the world say? Well, what matters it to you, what the world will say? Let the world say what it pleases. You, at least, in spite of the world's scoffing, will have the secret consolation of knowing that you are on a safe path, that you are out of harm's reach, that you will save your soul. Will the world ever be able to draw you out from the abyss, when once you have fallen into it? On other questions besides this, are you so particular about the world's opinion? And do you make that opinion the rule of your conduct? No, you say, if the world approves, I am glad of it. If not, I know what is for my own interest, and I am not going to render myself the slave of the world; nor to give up solid advantages out of deference to the world's opinion. When, therefore, the most momentous interest of all is at stake—nothing less than your eternal salvation, why should you make any account at all of what the world will say? Nor, indeed, need you fear, but that the world will sooner or later render you complete justice, applaud your conduct, and even perhaps imitate it.

In any case, my brethren, let us never forget that the fashion of this world passeth away. (I Cor. VII; 31.) Let us, then, at least, have the merit of leaving the world of our own free choice, before the world leaves us, which it will do, whether we like it or not. The service of the world is a hard slavery,

and to those who have worn themselves out in its service, the world has nothing to offer but indifference, contempt and scorn. Make, then, a virtue of necessity and renounce the ungrateful world in time before it rejects you. (Rom. XII; 2.) Be not conformed to this world, says the apostle: We know what it is to be conformed to this world, for another apostle tell us that "all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." (I John II; 16.) Again, the apostle reminds us that we have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit of the adoption of the children of God. (I Cor. II; 12.) Fly then, my brethren, from the corruption of the world (II Pet. I; 4); and partake not of its spirit. But, rather, walk in the spirit whom you received in your baptism; and so you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, but triumphing over all your enemies, the devil, the world and the flesh, you shall receive the promised recompense.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"And He said: 'Young man, I say to thee, arise.' And he that was dead, sat up and he began to speak." (Luke VII; 14, 15.)

In the touching narrative which you have just heard, my dear brethren, we behold a conspicuous instance of our Divine Lord's Omnipotence, by which He was able to restore the dead to life, and of the

tender compassion of His human Heart which was moved with pity at the poor widow's tears, and which prompted Him to exert that omnipotence on her behalf. Let us picture to ourselves the incidents of that meeting. Jesus, then, is entering the village of Naim with His disciples and a great multitude, who were no doubt rehearsing His praises and celebrating His wonderful works among them, in joyful strains and with loud applause. But our blessed Lord came not to seek the applause of men, but rather to seek and to save the sheep that were lost of the house of Israel. (Matt. XV; 24.) And so He had ordained in His all-wise Providence, that that joyful throng which surrounded Him should be met at the gate by a procession of a very different character. Hence we are to learn, my dear brethren, that all the events of our life, whether joyful or sorrowful, are alike under the disposition of Divine Providence, and fall alike into the Divine plan by which "all things work together unto good" on behalf of the elect. (Rom. VIII; 28.)

Great, too, was the multitude which formed that procession. But their looks were full of sadness, their eyes were brimming with tears, their voices broken by sobs and lamentations. Why all this grief and wailing? We cast our eyes upon that bier and all is at once explained. Beneath that shroud we see the outline of a human form, once instinct with life and youthful vigour, now silent, stiffened, motionless; borne helplessly and unconsciously along on the shoulder of men to his last, long resting-place.

But sadder still, is the spectacle of that solitary figure which follows the corpse—bowed well nigh to the earth with the load of grief, not weeping with the eyes, for those fountains have long been dried up, but bleeding inwardly at the heart—the widowed mother who follows her only son to the grave. Time was when she had followed her husband in like manner, and had seen the companion of her life snatched from her side by death and laid in the cold, dark tomb. But she had still her only son left to remind her of him, to be the light of her darkening eyes, the joy of her widowed heart, the staff of her failing steps. And now he, too, is gone, cut off in the flower of his age, and leaving her alone in the world, helpless and hopeless. And yet not alone, nor helpless, nor hopeless, for Jesus meets her at the gate and His Heart is moved with compassion towards her.

And so, my brethren, is it now; Jesus is still the comfort and strength, the hope of all that labour and are heavily burdened with the load of grief (Matt. XI; 28), if only they would but seek Him. He Himself has said: "Let not your heart be troubled nor let it be afraid, I will come to you again. (Joh. XIV; 27.) I will not leave you orphans." (18.) Why, then, do we complain of the weariness and trouble and afflictions of this life when we have so sweet a Comforter to Whom we may have recourse? It is because we place our hopes in this world, that we suffer all this misery. Did we but turn our eyes and our hearts towards that tabernacle where He abides, we should then enjoy, even in the midst of

the tempest of tribulation, that sweet repose which He has promised to all those who come to Him. But, my brethren, there is another meaning contained in this gospel. It was a great thing for that poor widow, and it is a great thing for all poor afflicted souls, to find in Jesus their consolation amid the troubles which oppress them. But it was a greater thing for that young man; and it is a greater thing for all who, like him, are dead in sin, and are being borne off to the jaws of hell, to be rescued therefrom by the omnipotent hand of Divine grace.

It has been truly said, that the creation of the world is as nothing compared with the conversion of a sinner. For in the work of creation the Almighty finds nothing to resist His Will. "He spake, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created." (Ps. CXLVIII; 4.) But in the perverse will of man, God finds an element of resistance. For does not the sinner continue in his sins in spite of God's will made manifest to him, saying: thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour, and so on? Again, does not the sinner continue in his sins, in spite of the manifold graces with which God visits him—now one way, and now another—ever calling him to repentance? And yet he remains obdurate. The word and the power of God have gone forth, and they are frustrated by the perverse will of man; frustrated, so far as the state of the sinner is concerned, but not frustrated so far as God's unchangeable attributes are con-

cerned; for, in the latter end, His word and His power shall not be made void, but shall be exerted unto their condemnation: that "He may be justified in His words; and may overcome when He is judged." (Ps. L; 6.)

It is true that nothing, not even the perverse will of man, can resist the absolute Will of God. The will of man is subject to Him, even as everything else which He has created is subject to Him; and He can, if it so please Him, convert the persecutor Saul into a vessel of election. But these are extraordinary graces not vouchsafed to many, and not to be reckoned on by any without manifest presumption. And yet this is the grace and the conversion which is signified by the miracle which we are considering. This is the grace which has ever restored, and which is even now restoring, to the weeping Church many a child whose death she deplores, and whose lifeless corpse she follows weeping to the grave. This is the grace which may, even now, be offering itself to some here present. If so, mark the alternative which ensues. That grace is either accepted or rejected. If rejected, the ministers of Satan are already bearing that lifeless soul, to bury it in hell, whence there is no redemption. But if it is accepted, then he that was dead shall come to life again, shall rise from the bands of death with which he was bound, and shall raise his voice in the confession of his sins and in thanksgiving to God.

Now, my brethren, it is important that we should know this. For, certainly, it is a great step towards

conversion to know and feel that we need it; that the grace of God is knocking at the door of our heart. The chief reason why our Lord wept over Jerusalem was because she did not know the time of her visitation. Miserable, indeed, is the state of the sinner, who has gone on for years stifling the voice of conscience, until he has become totally insensible to the light of truth, totally deaf to the inspirations of grace, in short, a lifeless corpse. To awaken such a one requires, indeed, a miracle of Divine grace.

There are, in the gospel, circumstances figurative of the workings of grace in the conversion of the sinner, and, therefore, highly instructive. First, it is Jesus Who, being touched with compassion, draws near. This shows, that we are not capable of ourselves to take a single step towards our salvation, unless the grace of God prevents us, from Whom alone every good work takes its beginning. (James I; 17.) Next, He touched the bier. Thus, also, He touches the hearts of men in manifold ways. He has touched the bier, whereon you were being carried, as often as He has, by His Providence, withdrawn you from the occasion of sin; as often as some great solemnity, such as a mission, or the recurrence of the Easter obligation, awakens you to a sense of your duty; as often as He visits you with some calamity, such as loss of health, friends, means or reputation; as often as He upsets your worldly plans and projects, and permits the discomfiture of those hopes which you entertained, of pushing your way in the world. In such as these, and in many more ways, must we

have all experienced the touch of Divine grace, whose effect was to arrest us in our downward course; so that they that carried us, namely, our vicious habits, stood still. Happy for us then, if, knowing the time of our visitation, we listen to the voice of our Lord saying: 'Young man, I say to thee, arise.'

For, my brethren, we must not suppose that our conversion can be accomplished unless we co-operate with the Grace of God. Whenever, therefore, you hear our Lord's voice saying: 'Arise,' arise that very instant, and shake off the deadly lethargy of sin and indifference. "Rise, thou that sleepest; and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee." (Eph. V; 14.) Otherwise, each warning voice and grace resisted, will rise up at the day of judgment to bear witness against you, and add to your condemnation. "And he, that was dead, sat up." The sinner who has been resuscitated to the life of grace stands erect before God and man, his face turned towards heaven, our true home, free and unfettered in all his faculties, with that freedom wherewith Christ has made us free. (Gal. II; 31.) 'And he began to speak.' He opens his mouth in the confession of his sins; he prays without ceasing; he seeks, in all things, to procure the glory of God, and the edification of the Church which he has scandalized. The Church, on her part, joyfully receives him to her arms, even as that widowed mother receives to hers the son that was dead. "And He gave him to his mother."

Let us, then, no longer resist the grace of God, but arise immediately from habits of sin, from indiffer-

ence, from neglect of our religious duties; and thereby procure to the Church such great joy and consolation, to God the honour and glory which He is pleased to derive from our willing service, and to ourselves the inestimable blessing of being His adopted children by grace here, and hereafter co-heirs with Christ, in the kingdom of His glory.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Another Sermon. Abridged from Bourdaloue.)

"*Behold, a dead man was carried out.*" (Luke VII; 12.)

Of all the circumstances of that mournful procession which met our Lord as He entered the gate of Naim, what was it, think you, that touched His Heart most sensibly, and secured to Him most worthy compassion? It was the desolation and abadonment which He observed in that mother who bewailed the loss of her only son snatched from her by death. He pities her excessive attachment to her child; he pities the want of submission which she manifests to the decrees of Providence; He pities her want of faith which causes her to regard death with sentiments which are merely natural and human. He pities, not only her, but all of us also, who have not those perfect dispositions which faithful souls ought to have in regard of death; and who, through a cowardly timidity, make death an object of horror, instead of making it, as they might, a subject for the exercise of virtue, and regarding it as the crown of a well-

spent life. Hence, our Lord's compassion. He is moved with pity towards us. I wish, then, to make this compassion of the Son of God the subject of our meditation. And first, as to the grounds of this compassion.

It is a lamentable fact, that nothing can be more deplorable than the attitude, as to mind and heart, in which most people find themselves with regard to death. There are three classes of people who fear death: infidels, worldly people, and, generally, all mankind, through a natural infirmity. Let us first take the case of unbelievers. Tertullian has said, with that shrewd terseness which characterizes his sayings, that "no one believes that there is no God except the man whose interest it is that there should be no God." And we may say with equal truth that no one desires, or pretends, to deny a future state, except the man whose interest it is that there should be no future state. The inspired author of the Book of Wisdom, speaking of the death of the just who die in the friendship of God, uses this expression: "In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die." (Wisd. III; 2.) Mark the expression: '*seemed* to die.' For, in fact, they did not die, in the sense in which infidels understand it. And what is that sense? The Holy Ghost goes on to say that they persuade themselves that death, which in reality is only a departure from this world, and a journey, which conducts the just to their eternal rest is, according to their notion, a climax of desolation, and the end of all that is human. "And their departure was taken for misery; and their

going away from us, for utter destruction." (2, 3.) This is the notion of the universe, of the fool who said in his heart: 'there is no God.' (Ps. XIII; 1.)

But, if they do not believe in a future state, why should they fear death? They have every reason to fear it: and experience shows that they do fear it when it comes, however much they may have mocked at it before it comes. For what does death mean to these infidels? One of two things: either total extinction of their conscious existence, which, itself is an unspeakable calamity; or, if not that, then it means the beginning of an eternity of misery. Again, even the most hardened infidel cannot divest himself of the suspicion that, after all, there may be a future state. This terrible uncertainty is enough to embitter the thought of death, and make it an object of fear and terror to them. Against the infatuation of these men let us apply to ourselves the exhortation of St. Paul: "We will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope." (I Thess. IV; 12.) Observe that the apostle does not forbid us to fear death, nor to feel for the death of our kindred and friends: but he forbids us to grieve and to fear like those who, living without religion, live without hope of eternal life; 'as the rest who have no hope.' For such a fear, and such a sadness, springing from want of faith, is no less a crime in the sight of God than infidelity itself. It resolves itself then to this: I may fear death, but not from any sort of motive. I may not fear it in a way which is opposed to the purity of the faith.

The second class of people who fear death consists of the worldly-minded: those who set their hearts upon the riches, honours, pleasures and pursuits of this world. They fear death because it makes a final separation between them and all that they hold dear. "O death," cries out the wise man: "how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that hath peace in his possession!" (Eccle. XLI; 1.) Let us here observe, with St. Augustine, that he does not say, to a man that has riches, but to one who places his happiness in the possession of wealth. For Christians, guided by the Spirit of God, look upon these possessions as mere accidents, which they can easily dispense with: which they may have to-day, and of which they may be deprived to-morrow; the loss of which may indeed cause them some perturbation; but cannot undermine that firm and immovable constancy which is founded on Divine Grace. Whereas worldly people, attached to earthly goods, make them their sole end and object; they measure everything in relation to them; they live for them alone; they find their satisfaction in them; as though they were made for the sake of these things, instead of the things being made to serve their use. "To a man that hath peace in his possession:" it is to such as these, and not to the noble and rich, as such, that the thought of death inspires dread. For them it is full of bitterness: "how bitter is the remembrance of thee." St. Chrysostom, in his comment on this text, remarks that we have seen christians of rank and wealth, thanks to

the all-powerful grace of God, meditate on death with pleasure, hear it spoken of with joy, receive the announcement of it with unconcern; and why? Because, wealthy and noble as they were, their aspirations were directed neither to earthly greatness nor riches.

We have heard how the infidel, who denies the existence of God is stigmatised as a fool in holy Scripture. That is to say, he is one who has abused his rational faculties. Now, precisely the same epithet is applied by our Lord, in the gospel to these worldly people: "thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (Luke XII; 20.) Yes, they are indeed fools, however wise and prudent they may be from a worldly point of view. Senseless man! Why this extravagant care for a body, which will soon be the food of worms? Why these colossal schemes, which death will soon upset and dissipate? Why such solicitude to aggrandize yourself, to enlarge your estate, when, after a few days, six feet of earth will be all that you will require? Against this insane covetousness which consumes the soul, overpowers the reason, and makes us enamoured of transitory things, St. Paul uses this simple argument: 'We have not here a lasting city." (Hebr. XIII; 14.) So long as we live in this world, we are absent from our true country, and ought to consider ourselves as pilgrims. (II Cor. V; 6.) Now, what would be the thought of a traveller, homeward-bound, who, instead of pressing on to his wished-for goal,

should loiter by the way, and allow himself to be fascinated by every trivial thing that met him on the road? Yet, this is just what men do; and it is just this conduct which inspires them with such a lively fear of death, as to make them truly objects of compassion.

I have said that there is a third class of people who fear death: not, indeed, so guilty as the two former classes, but yet who fear it, not wholesomely and religiously, but from a natural instinctive weakness to which all mankind is subject; but which becomes reprehensible, unless it is regulated and elevated by religious principles. Even the pagans had light enough to ridicule this irrational apprehension. The pagan philosopher, Seneca, points out that whereas there are many and stupendous inequalities in human life and fortune, death equalizes them all. Moreover, the lame philosopher pointed out how death, which is the common term to which all men tend, comes as a remedy to many; as an object of desire to some; as a means of happiness to others. Whilst, as for the rest, it ought never to be more welcome than to those to whom it comes, before they are under the necessity of invoking it. Even from a natural point of view, the argument is just. For one who weighs well the may miseries from which death delivers us, and all the sufferings incident to a protracted life, will easily conclude that the shortness of our days is one of the graces for which we are indebted to Divine Providence. However, I do not wish to fortify you

against the fear of death by pagan arguments. I only allude to them for our own confusion, in showing ourselves less resolute than the pagans in overcoming the fear of death.

But the motive which I would propose to you is the example of the Saints, and of so many holy souls. Have we not the same resources as they had, to fortify us against death? How is it, then, that we constantly use language so different, and even contrary to that of the servants of God? Hear what holy David says: "Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged." (Ps. CXIX; 5, 6.) How long also is my exile to last; and when will it finish? "My soul hath been long a sojourner. I faint with weariness upon the earth, because it is a strange land for me. When shall I come and appear before the face of my God?" (Ps. XLI; 3.) Happy moment, when I shall come into the presence of my God! I expect it, I desire it, I demand it. Thus did the holy king and prophet express himself, and how many others, saints of the new covenant, have felt the same sentiments, and have made use of the same terms to express them. But our dispositions are very different. We find our exile of too short duration; we would like to live for ever in this world; we grieve at being forced to leave it; and all our ardent aspirations are directed to the putting off the time of our departure, the thought of which fills us with grief.

No doubt, there is one consideration which is a legitimate cause for regarding death with fear. It

is because of the judgment which immediately follows: because it irrevocably decides our destiny for all eternity. One word then, in conclusion, as to this consideration. St. Augustine observes that it is with the fear of death, as is it with the love of God. We must love God, and also fear Him. But love must always preponderate, though fear will enter in proportion to the imperfection of our love. Hence, when love is perfect, we are told that it casteth out fear. (I Joh. IV; 18.) It is the same with the thought of death. We ought to love and hope for death as the necessary means of uniting us with God. True, a certain amount of fear, proportioned to our imperfection, will always be mingled with our view of death. But the more we seek to love God, and to cleave to Him, the less will this fear take hold on us. So that we shall be able to say with the apostle: "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." (Phil. I; 23.) Thus the fear of death, which the judgment of God inspires, will restrain us from sin; and, by persevering in the grace of God, we shall come to such a perfect love of Him, as will cast out all fear. Then shall we able be to say: "O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. XV; 55, 57.)

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson. From St. Augustine Sermon 164.)

"Bear ye one another's burdens; and so, you shall fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. VI; 2.)

The apostle admonishes us all to bear one another's burdens; and strengthens that admonition by the remark that we shall thus fulfil the law of Christ. As much as to say that if we do not bear one another's burdens, we shall not fulfil that law. Now, since it is clear that we all of us profess, at least, to fulfil this law, it is necessary for us to consider what these burdens are, and how they are to be borne. But first, we must explain an apparent contradiction in the apostle's words. For, he says: "every one shall bear his own burden;" and that, almost immediately after he has exhorted us to bear one another's burdens. The apparent contradiction is explained by distinguishing different kinds of burdens. There are, then, some burdens which every man must carry himself, and which he cannot throw upon the shoulders of another. Whilst there are others, in regard of which, you may properly say to another: 'I will carry this with you, or I will carry it for you.'

Now, the burdens, which we must carry ourselves, are our sins. It is of these that the apostle speaks when he says: "every one shall bear his own burden." But, lest we should think that, because we are not responsible for others sins, therefore we are freed from all obligations towards our brethren, the apostle says: "bear ye one another's burdens; for so you

shall fulfil the law of Christ." What these burdens are which we must bear for ane another, we shall see later on. The burdens, which each one must bear for himself, are his sins. And a terrible and overpowering burden it is. And yet, though none of our brethren can bear that burden for us, there is One Who will bear it with us and for us. Our Divine Lord has said: "Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened; and I will refresh you." (Matt. XI; 28.) How does He refresh His sin-laden creatures, except by pardoning their sin, by taking their burdens from them? Hence, the Redeemer of the world cries aloud to those who are weary of their burdens: "Hear, O race of men: hear, O children of Adam; hear, O toil worn people; I see your labour; behold, what I can give you. I know that you toil, and are heavily burdened; and, what is still more sad, that you lay crushing burdens on your own shoulders; and, what is worse still, that you are looking for more burdens, instead of seeking to get them removed."

Time would fail me to recount the multiplicity and variety of these burdens. One hugs one burden, another another. With one it is ambition, with another avarice, with another sensuality, with another anger, with another drunkenness, with another uncharitableness, with another neglect of religious duties. Who is there who does not carry one or other of these burdens, perhaps, several of them? How many are there who are so fond of their burdens, that they are quite angry if any one lays but

a finger on them; who come to the church with their burdens, and go away with them? But, if you will not hear me, hear, at least, your King imploring you: "Come to Me, all you who labour, and are burdened." For this is why you have come, that you may labour no longer. 'You wish to follow Me.' He says, 'but you cannot, with those heavy burdens. Come, and I will refresh you. I will pardon you the past: I will take away that which weighs you down: I will heal your galled shoulders. I will take away your present burdens, it is true; but, then I will give you others. I will take away the evil burdens, and give you blessed ones.' For He adds: 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.' Learn of Me. You have learned long enough in the school of the world, the flesh and the devil, Christ, your Master, the Son of God, the only true, the only truthful, Truth itself, cries out: 'Learn of Me.' And what are we to learn of Him? Are we to learn that in the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; and that all things were made by Him? Is this what we are to learn of Him—how to create the world, to fill the heavens with starry spheres, to arrange the order of the seasons, and the cycles of the sun, to create the living principle of things, to fill the world with life? Oh no! none of these things does our heavenly teacher bid us learn of Him. He does those things as God. We are to imitate Him in that which He does as Man. 'Learn of Me.' He does not say, to create the world, nor the species of things; nor even those other works,

which the Godhead, hidden under His human form wrought. For He does not say; "learn of Me, to cure fevers, to expel demons, to raise the dead to life, to command the winds and the waves, to walk on the waters." These gifts He gave, indeed, to some of His disciples, to others He did not give them. For neither are they necessary to all.

But there is one lesson which it is necessary for all to learn of Him: and from this precept no one is, or can be, excused.' 'Learn of Me,' he says, 'because I am meek and humble of heart.' (Matt. XI; 29.) Why should we hesitate to carry this burden? Is this a heavy burden,—humility, meekness? Is this a grievous burden—Faith, Hope, Charity? For it is they that make us humble and meek. You may be sure that your burden will not be a heavy one; for He says: "My yoke is sweet; and My burden light." (30) And how light is it? Shall we say that it is lighter only than the load of sin? Not only that: but this burden of our Lord is not a burden to weigh us down at all, it enables us to fly. Let us take an example from a bird. A bird's wings are a burden to it. It has to carry its wings, and yet it is carried by them. The bird carries them on the ground; it is carried by them up to heaven. Would it not be mistaken compassion, on our part if, seeing a bird dragging its wings, you were to say: 'Poor little thing, I will cut off its wings.' For then it would not be able to fly. For the same reason, let us not seek to divest ourselves of that blessed burden, the yoke of Christ, which is able to lift us up to heaven.

There are, then, two kinds of burdens, both of which each must bear for himself. 'For every one shall bear his own burden.' One the burden of sin, which is heavy and grievous; the other the burden of Christ, which is light and pleasant. One of these two burdens we must all carry; the burden of concupiscence or the burden of grace. That will weigh us down to hell; this will carry us up to heaven.

Thus far, my dear brethren, you have been listening, not to my words, but to the words of the great St. Augustine, whose sermon on this text, preached 1500 years ago, I have given to you almost word for word.

The remainder of the sermon I omit, as it is directed against the Donatists; and has, therefore, ceased to be applicable to the present time. But I will conclude with one more extract from the same sermon which illustrates what kind of burdens are those which the apostle exhorts us to bear for one another.

They are, as you will have already guessed, the burdens of charity. St. Augustine supposes two persons, one rich the other poor. And when I say rich and poor, do not say to yourselves: "we are all of us poor and none of us rich; so that the comparison can have no application for us." For, the truth is, we are all of us rich and all of us poor. Riches do not consist in abundance of wealth, nor poverty in the want of it. We all stand in need of one another, and we can all help one another. There is no one so poor who cannot help his fellow-creatures in a thousand ways if he be so minded; and no one so rich as not to

stand in need of many things from others. Let us, then, take the case of these two persons; he is poor, you are rich. That is to say, he stands in need of food, of health, of comfort, of advice, of sympathy, of good example. and you are able to afford it. That want or necessity, therefore, is his burden; a burden which you have not to carry. When, therefore, he asks you for help, and though he may not ask in words his very condition asks most eloquently, do not say in reply: "every one shall bear his own burden;" but remember the other precept: "bear ye one another's burdens." His helplessness is not my burden but it is my brother's, which I must carry for him.

Take care, then, that that which you have and he has not, become not a burden to you. He is not well off, you are. That is the same thing as saying: "he has one burden, you another." Help him to carry his; and let him help to carry yours. What is his burden? The not having that which he wants. What is yours? Having more than you want; or of which you make no use. He is burdened and you are burdened. Exchange burdens—share with him, and let him share with you, that your burdens may be equal. If you give to me who wants, you lessen his burden of indigence, whilst he lessens your burden of superfluity.

Thus, we may, all of us, in our measure, fulfil the apostolical injunction. And "in due time we shall reap not failing." (Gal. VI; 9.) For we shall reap an abundant harvest of good works and merits in this life (I Pet. V; 4), and a never-fading crown of glory in the next.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*" (Luke XIV; 11.)

The virtue of humility, my dear brethren, is a subject of which you have, no doubt, heard a great deal, but of which I can safely say you cannot hear too much. Hence, at the risk of wearying you by repetition of familiar truths, I will pursue the ordinary course of speaking to you on the gospel of the Sunday. The example of our Lord shows that this course cannot be considered inopportune. For we find that He delivered this discourse on the occasion of a dinner to which He had been invited; and it was directed against the pride and ambition manifested in the conduct of some of the guests who had been invited. If, then, it was not unseasonable to preach humility on that festive occasion, much less can it be so now, when we are met to meditate on the great truths of faith. It cannot be doubted that the imperfection of our daily lives, our tepidity in God's service, our lack of zeal and love, are mainly owing to our want of humility.

On the other hand, it was humility which made the saints what they were; and the height of their sanctity was in proportion to the depth of their humility. This ought not to surprise us, for the Scripture tells us that pride is the beginning of all sin, and since union with God can only be accomplished through the destruction of sin, it is evidence

that humility must bring us back to God. This truth is expressed in our Lord's words: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." That is to say, the more we abase ourselves before God, the less we esteem ourselves in our own eyes, the less we seek to be esteemed by others; the more shall we be raised in God's estimation, and the higher shall we be exalted in His favour. This may seem somewhat paradoxical and hard to believe and practice; that the worse we think of ourselves the better we become, and that our worthiness is in proportion to the conviction of our unworthiness. But in reality, my dear brethren, there is no truth more plain and simple if we only look at the principle on which it acts—that God is everything and self nothing.

Hence, it is easy to understand that the transformation in which sanctity consists, can only be effected in proportion as self is trampled under foot. By self I mean, of course, our whole nature and being, soul and body, with all their faculties and powers according to that; "He hath subjected all things under His Feet." (Eph. I; 22.) For what is self but everything that is evil? Our whole nature is corrupt, tainted at its very source, and corrupting its ways on the earth as long as it is left to itself. Hence, the distinction between the old and the new man; the old nature which we receive from our father Adam; and the new nature which we receive from the new Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the old nature is our own certainly; and we carry it about with us, to our shame and sorrow, even to the grave.

But the new nature is not ours save in so far as it is conferred upon us gratuitously by God's grace. It becomes ours by our putting on Jesus Christ—by becoming members of His body. "If then, we have received," asks the apostle, "why do we glory as if we had not received?" (I Cor. IV; 7.)

Thus we see, that humility is the truth, the pure and simple truth; and that whereas some other virtues lie in the mean, between two extremes, it is not so with humility; seeing that we cannot exaggerate humility. We cannot have too low an opinion of ourselves. For the utmost possible self-abasement is only an approximation to the truth, and every vestige of self-esteem that remains in us, is, so far, offensive to the God of Truth, and an obstacle to the action of the Holy Spirit on our souls.

But, my brethren, it is of very little use proving to you that you ought to be humble unless you practically seek to humble yourselves. Herein lies the difficulty. It is easy enough to listen to instructions and to make resolutions. But it is not so easy to carry them out, unless we have a good will. The practice of humility is difficult because it is easy. This seems a strange statement, but I will explain myself. There are many who profess to be fervent Christians who will undergo cheerfully great mortifications but will not submit to little ones. Now, this disposition is quite in keeping with our corrupt nature. In encountering great difficulties we feel a certain pride in resistance and self-congratulation on achieving the victory. But there is no room for

self-congratulation in the petty incidents of every-day life, and being full of self we allow ourselves to be overcome by self.

Humility, then, is to be acquired by practising it on such trivial occasions as these. It is like a delicate flower, whose bloom the slightest touch or breath will efface. And the more insignificant the contest, the more glorious will be the victory of humility. The truth of this observation—that humility is to be practised in little things and in the commonest occurrences of every-day life, is shown by the incidents of this day's gospel. Jesus remarked how the guests chose the first seats at the table, and He bade them choose not the first, but the lowest place. This may seem a trifling matter, but our Lord did not deem it unworthy of his notice. It is in such apparent trifles as these that perfection consists.

A Christian is a Christian, in small things as well as in great. He is bound to practise the rules of Christian discipline in all the ways and circumstances of life, down to its most trivial details. "Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (I Cor. X; 31.) There is much meaning contained in those words of our Divine Lord: "The Kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation." (Luke XVII; 20.) The grace of God, and the supernatural life, do not necessarily imply great and heroic deeds, but the doing of our ordinary actions well; that is, in a supernatural way.

It is a common delusion of the devil to persuade

people that such and such a virtue is impracticable and not meant for them. "Do not talk to me of humility," some one will say, "that is not meant for me but for saints." Very well; then heaven is not meant for you. For if anything is certain, it is surely this, that no one will ever enter heaven without humility. Humility is an essential part of the Christian character; and he is no Christian who does not practise it. With regard to the practise of humility, it has already been pointed out, that the more trivial the circumstances the better is the opportunity. For if it were something great and striking, then there would be great danger lest we should spoil the whole thing by our self-congratulation and satisfaction.

There is a distinction which we must not lose sight of; namely, between exterior and interior humility. The advice which our Lord gives us in the gospel refers to exterior acts of humility. But it is quite possible and, unhappily, but too common, that people perform these exterior acts of humility without having any real interior humility of heart; in which case their humility is but a sham and hypocrisy. "Learn of Me," says our Lord, "because I am meek and humble of *Heart*." (Matt. XI; 29.) It is well, indeed, when beginning to acquire this virtue, that we should force ourselves to acts of humility, though we do not feel genuine sentiments of humility, because this is an effectual way of acquiring the habit of the virtue. But we must never forget that this virtue, like all other virtues, consists in a habit or disposition of the soul; and that we must never rest

satisfied with mere acts of humility, until they spontaneously flow from an abiding disposition of the soul.

I would conclude with pointing out one most salutary practice of humility which is the sacramental confession of our sins, and one most efficacious source of humility which is the sacramental communion of the Body and Blood of Him Who debased Himself, taking the form of a servant. (Phil. II; 7, 8.) Who humbled Himself, not only to death, but even to the putting off the form of our nature and clothing His Divinity and Humanity in the appearances of bread and wine. And as He is now glorified according to that, "for which cause God also hath exalted Him and hath given Him a Name which is above every name (9); so we, also, if we humble ourselves after the manner of His humiliation, shall be exalted in the likeness of His Glory.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"*To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge.*" (Eph. III; 19.)

There is no one, I suppose, here present, or indeed, anywhere to be found, provided he has not altogether lost all faith and hope, who would not, as far as words go, profess that he hopes one day to enjoy the happiness of heaven. I say, "as far as words go," for how many are there who while they profess

to hope for heaven, seem to show not the slightest concern about the way of getting there! Now, it is a common maxim that the means must be proportioned to the end. Hence, if we really wish to get to heaven we must live and act in such a way as to bring us there. The happiness of heaven, we are told, consists in seeing God, and, in seeing and knowing Him, to love Him. For to know God is to love Him; and in knowing and loving Him we become like to Him; we become partakers of His own eternal bliss.

Now, it is evident that any one who seriously looks forward to such a destiny as this, must begin here to know God, to love Him, and to become like to Him. For our condition for all eternity will be precisely that in which we are found at the hour of our death. This life is the time of our probation. There is no possibility of acquiring a new state of disposition of the soul after death. Such as we are at that moment such shall we be for all eternity. Now, let each one of us ask himself, suppose God were to call me out of the world at this moment what is the state of my soul? In what degree does Christ dwell in my heart? How far am I rooted and founded in charity; for on that will depend my destination for all eternity. No wonder, then, the apostle was so earnest in exhorting the faithful of Ephesus to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the length and breadth, and height and depth; to know also the charity of Christ, that they might be filled unto all the fulness of God. For unquestionably, our want of love for

God is owing to our not comprehending the love of God for us. Whilst on the other hand, the more we meditate on God's love for us, the more shall we be moved to love Him in return and be filled with His fulness. Let us, then, dwell for a few moments on this great mystery—the love of God for man—the tender, the undeserved, the generous, the constant love of God for man.

To most people God is a mere abstraction. They cannot see Him with their eyes, nor feel Him with their hands; and so absorbed as they are, in the visible and tangible things of this world, to them the existence is merely an idea which has no practical bearing on their lives, and the love of God is a mere expression which for them has little or no practical signification. But, my dear brethren, surely this is a fearful mistake. Are not such as these—and alas, there are but too many such, even in the household of the faith—are they not grouping in worse than Egyptian darkness, who have suffered themselves to be so blinded by their passions, by their worldliness, by their reckless indifference to grace, that they forget that God alone is—that in comparison with Him, nothing can be said to exist at all. 'I am Who am,' is the awful name by which He revealed Himself to His servant Moses. 'I am Who am.' I am the Supreme Being, Who alone am that self-sufficient Being, and besides Me, there is none other. For whatever else exists, has but a shadowy existence derived from God, dependent on God. All this we must believe, if we believe in God at all. And yet

in spite of this belief the greater part of mankind go on worshipping the world, the visible and tangible things of the world, and ignoring God, as if He has no rights in the sphere of His Own creation.

Nevertheless, Almighty God, in His infinite goodness, has condescended to this weakness on the part of His creatures; and seeing that all mankind longed with irresistible yearning for some visible, tangible object of worship—He, I say, has condescended to their desire, and has Himself come down from His throne of inaccessible light (I Tim. VI;16); and clothing Himself with our mortal shape, was seen upon the earth, and conversed with men (Bar. III; 38); so that they might have no excuse for not loving Him.

God Incarnate is our Emmanuel; that is, God with us. He is the very charity of God brought home to us in a visible, tangible form, that so we might be compelled to love Him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. (Luke X; 27.) Hence, St. John commences his sublime letter to the churches in this wise: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life. For the Life was manifested, and we have seen and do bear witness and declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." (I Joh. I; 1,3.) This, then, is one great manifestation of the love of God for man; the Word made Flesh and dwelling among us. (John I; 14.) Not to love God

after that is to be at once condemned. "Wherefore, O man, thou art inexcusable." (Rom. II; 1.) Moreover, this love of God for man, is not of that abstract kind which people of the world are apt to imagine as characteristic of Divine things. It is a keen, personal, tender love.

He took a human heart on purpose to love us with all the abysses of love which lie treasured up in the shrine of His sacred Humanity. Assuredly, the purest and tenderest type of human love is to be found in the love of a mother for the babe at her breast. And yet, God Himself has used this comparison to reveal to us His love for us: "Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the Son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." (Is. XLIX; 15.) What can be more touching and tender, than the blandishments of a mother's caress which she lavishes on her babe, and the care with which she nourishes it? Even so, God says to us, His children: "You shall be carried at the breasts, as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you." (Is. LXVI; 12, 13.)

Again, the love of God is an undeserved love. That one should love another by whom he is beloved is not surprising. But God has loved us before ever we loved Him; before even we were capable of loving Him; nay, even when so far from loving Him, we were offending Him, inflicting on Him all the outrages which a creature is capable of inflicting on his Creator. These are simple, obvious truths, and surely ought to move us to love God somewhat, if

only we reflected on them. "Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us." (I Joh. IV; 19.) He loved us even before we existed, in the days of His eternity, when His infinite Mind contemplated our future existence. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. XXXI; 3.) He loved us even when we were His enemies by sin. "In this is charity, not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins." (I Joh. IV; 10.)

Thirdly, the love of God is a generous love. "Having loved His own, who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (Joh. XIII; 1.) What is the end of Divine Charity? What limit shall we put to that which is essentially illimitable, infinite? If you wish for proofs of this generous love, look upon the manger of Bethlehem, upon the cross of Calvary, upon the altar, upon the tabernacle. See God abiding there by His sacramental presence, and judge from that of the generosity of His love for man.

Lastly, this love of God is not like the love of man, a capricious love, liable at any moment to be turned to indifference, perhaps to hatred; but it is a constant love. Our own sad experience tells us how inconstant we are. At one time we say we love God, at another we offend Him. Perhaps we go on for days, weeks, months, years, in offending Him; for we can be constant enough in sin. But all this time the love of God remains unchangeable; either dwelling in our hearts by charity, if we will let Him, or if we drive Him out by sin, ever prompting us by

His grace to repentance. Can we not, then, strive to make Him some return of love? This, my brethren, is the resolution which the apostle exhorts you in this day's lesson to make, and this is the grace which you ought earnestly to implore when the Lamb of God is being immolated on this altar; and this is the blessing which I invoke upon you; "that you may be able to comprehend what is the length and breadth, the height and depth of the charity of Christ; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.*" (Matt. XXII; 37.)

When our Divine Lord was asked by a young man what he should do to obtain life everlasting, our Lord replied: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. XIX; 17.) There are, as you know, ten commandments, and on the observance of these depends all our hope of salvation. Now, there are many people who flatter themselves that they are keeping the Commandments, as long as they do not injure their neighbour; as long as they do not fall into any of those notorious vices which bring them into disgrace in the eyes of men. There are many, and even Catholics, too, who think because they do not steal, or curse, or injure their neighbour in any way—because they are sober and chaste,

truthful and honest—because they do their duty towards their wives, their husbands, their children; because they are charitable and forgiving; that therefore they have nothing to fear; forgetting altogether that they may be all this and even a great deal more, and yet be all the time neglecting one commandment which is not by any means the least important, but is, in fact, the first and greatest of them all—"thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind." Unless we do this—unless we can say with a safe conscience that we love God with all the affections of our heart, so as not to prefer any creature whatsoever to Him, that we love Him with all the powers of our soul, so as to make God the supreme object of all our aspirations, of all our aims, of all our desires, of all our daily actions; that we love God with our whole mind, so that God should be uppermost in all our thoughts, that His law and His truth should be the rule of all our judgments; that all our energies should be devoted to His service; unless we can say all this, and say it conscientiously, we may be assured that we have done nothing; that all our supposed virtues are worthless for eternal life. For we have broken the first and greatest of all the Commandments, and in breaking that we have become guilty of all. The love of God is the end of the law, and without that (I Tim. 1; 5), we are nothing but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. (I Cor. XIII; 1.) For of what value are our virtues and good works unless they are rooted and founded

in that Divine Charity which consists in loving God above all things and with our whole heart. Let us, then, consider some of the motives why we should love God.

The first motive is that God desires us to love Him. This is proved to us by the fact that God has created all things, and has endowed them with the resemblance of His Own Divine Attributes—His beauty, His power, His goodness, and so forth, in order to attract our love for Him Who is the Author of all this beauty. (Wisd. XIII; 3.) As this was not sufficient, since our corrupt nature forgot the Creator in the contemplation of the creature, He sent His only Son to call back our affections to Himself. "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke XII; 49.) This very Commandment, which stands written on the first page of His holy law, is a proof of His desire. And all the other Commandments are but means to the end; they are helps to enable us to fulfil the law of charity. For the end of the commandment is charity. (I Tim. I; 5.)

Again, all the virtues which we are called on to practice, what are they but means to the same end? Thus, we know God by faith in order that we may love Him. We hope in God in order that we may be united to Him as our sovereign Good; and so of all the other virtues. For "what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear Him and love Him with all thy heart?" (Deut. X; 12.) Even the fear of God is but a help to enable us to love

Him. "Ye that fear the Lord, love him," exclaims the wise man. (Eccle. II; 10.) The love of God transcends faith and hope; it is the Queen of virtues: for "the greatest of these is charity." (I Cor. XIII; 13.)

Other virtues are practiced on earth, love alone reigns in heaven. "Charity never falleth away." (I Cor. XIII; 8.) The gifts and graces, the inspirations, the secret promptings, the yearnings and aspirations we feel for something better, the dissatisfaction we feel with ourselves, with our shortcomings, our miserable weaknesses, our petty selfishness; all this flows from the charity of the Divine Heart of our Lord. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us." (Rom. V; 5.) The Church of God with its infallible truth, its sublime morality, its solemn ceremonial, its unceasing sacrifice, its august sacraments, preaches to us one great perpetual lesson on the love of God. Go where we will, do what we may, we shall find ourselves everywhere and in everything encompassed in the everlasting arms of Divine Love. (Deut. XXXIII; 27.) The promised joys of heaven and the threatened pains of hell alike proclaim the Love of God for us. Lest you should be incredulous on this latter point, hear what the great St. Agunstine says. He exclaims: "O God, the severity of Thy judgments against the ungrateful who will not love thee, proves the excess of Thy love for me. I could not expect Thee to permit me to love Thee; how great must be Thy goodness, when Thou com-

mandest me to love Thee; when Thou threatenest me with the greatest punishments if I love Thee not, as if not to love Thee were not itself the greatest of all punishments."

The second motive is that, not only does God desire our love, but He also deserves it. One would have thought it superfluous to speak of these things, did one not see how entirely God is forgotten by those who call themselves Christians, so that it becomes necessary to remind them of these elementary truths. God has created the heart of man to love, and there is only one object which can satisfy the heart of man, and that is God. Never shall we be able to find complete satisfaction in any creature; and the heart remains unsatisfied and unhappy until it finds repose in the sovereign Good. Where shall we seek greatness, power, beauty, wisdom, goodness, if not in God? When St. Augustine, after his conversion, was led by Divine grace to contemplate the Divine Perfections, he cried out in ecstacy: "Why did I not know Thee before, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new! Why did I not love Thee before!

And we, what excuse shall we make for ourselves, who have not, like him, been brought up in ignorance and error? We have known these truths from our infancy; and yet must we not confess: "Too late have I loved Thee." Too late for Thy glory, which has been outraged by my crimes—too late for my innocence, which has been tarnished by my sins—too late for my peace of mind, which has been destroyed by the remorse of a guilty conscience; but not too

late for my hope of salvation, if only I begin from this moment to love Thee above all things, as Thou deservest to be loved. For, my brethren, God will not accept the love of a divided heart. We must love Him with our whole heart; and all other creatures for His sake alone. Can we then say that now at least, though late, we are resolved to love God with all our heart and soul, with all our mind and strength?

A third motive for loving God is that God loves us. What a mystery is this! That God, who is an unfathomable abyss of perfection and goodness, should condescend to love me, who am an abyss of misery and baseness. And yet, so it is. The love of a fellow-creature, frail and imperfect as ourselves, moves us to sympathy and love in return. For the love of God alone we care nothing, we feel nothing. And yet, can any love compare with the love which God bears towards us? What is a mother's love for her first-born compared to it? Hear what the prophet says: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." (Is. XLIX; 15.) Again, he says: "you shall be carried at the breasts; and upon the knees they shall caress you; as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you." (Is. LXVI; 12, 13.) Hard indeed must be the heart which is not moved to make some return of love for the excessive love which has been lavished on it.

God has loved us even before we loved Him.

"Let us therefore love God: because God first hath loved us." (I Joh. IV; 19.) He loved us before we existed: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. XXXI; 3.) He loved us even when we were His enemies; when by our sins we had deserved His hatred, and provoked His just indignation. How much has He loved us? If you wish to know, cast your eyes on the crib of Bethlehem, on the cross of Calvary, on the tabernacle of the altar; and they will speak to your heart more eloquently than any words that man can frame. For very shame, then, my dear brethren, let us try to love God more fervently than we have hitherto done; let us make Him the supreme object of all our thoughts, of all our words and actions. Let us prefer Him to all creatures; and for His sake renounce everything that can stand between us and the duty we owe to Him. He, in return, will lavish His love upon us. Strong in that love, we shall feel no aching void in the heart; we shall shrink from no suffering; we shall overcome every obstacle in the way of our salvation. "For I am sure," says the apostle, "that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. VIII; 38, 39.)

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Lesson.)

"*One body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling.*" (Eph. IV; 4.)

In the ordinary avocations of life, my dear brethren, one experiences little difficulty in acquiring the spirit which characterizes the particular calling to which one belongs. The merchant, the lawyer, the soldier, the sailor, the politician, the man of science and the man of letters, are all animated with the peculiar spirit of their calling. They speak a language of their own, their ideas are peculiarly their own, their method of life is assimilated to one standard; and, finally, there exists among them a spirit of jealous regard for the maintenance of this traditional discipline, and of resentment against any attempt to infringe it. The wisdom of the children of this world in adopting this policy, is clearly apparent. Nothing can be accomplished in this world save by the continued and consistent application of forces directed towards the end desired. Though man, individually, is one of the weakest of creatures, yet when many are united, there is nothing they cannot achieve.

But men cannot act together unless they think alike. For the soul is the mainspring of all our actions; and as the mind thinks, so the man acts. In vain, therefore, do men whose views are at variance apply themselves to a common task. Those individual efforts which, united would have overcome

the greatest obstacles, being disunited among themselves, succumb to the most trivial. Hence it is that in the systems and policies which rule the affairs of this world, we find the greatest efforts made to cast men's minds in one uniform mould; that so there may be as little collision and friction as possible; and that all may work together harmoniously towards the common weal.

But, my brethren, there is one vocation which, more than any other, requires this unison of heart and mind; I mean the sacred calling of the Christian brotherhood. For if, as St. Paul says: "God hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation," (II Cor. V; 18) and the end of that ministry be the uniting of all the members of Christ's Body in the most perfect unison, how can that end be obtained save by means which breathe the very spirit of unison and mutual charity? Let us, then, briefly consider the grave obligation we are under of cultivating this spirit of fraternal charity.

1. First, this is a most sacred duty incumbent on us as creatures of Almighty God, Who made us all to His Own image and likeness. Our Divine Lord, in this Sunday's gospel, sums up and enunciates the principle on which the whole of morality depends, when He declares the great commandment to be: "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy mind." This is the first and the greatest Commandment. But the second is like unto it: "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." On these two command-

ments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. (Matt. XXII; 40.) This second Commandment is like unto the first, because it is derived from it. As we were all made to God's image and likeness; so the semblance of the duty of love we owe to God passes to the creature, which bears the stamp of His Divinity: and we love, in the creature, the reflection of the amiable attribute of the Creator. The love, therefore, of our brethren is included in, and inseparable from the love of God. Hence, just as there can be no salutary love of the creature which is not based on the love of God so there can be no genuine love to God which does not extend itself to those who, as well as ourselves, are the objects of God's love. "If any man say, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar." (I Joh. IV; 20.)

2. Again, my dear brethren, we are not only the creature of God, but also brethren one of another in Jesus Christ, who is our common Brother, as "the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. VIII; 29.) The consideration of this mystery alone, furnishes us with an inexhaustible source of reflexions on the subject of this discourse. Just as frequent meditation on the mystery of the Incarnation is the best preservative of the spirit of fraternal charity, so there is nothing which so surely leads to its violation as the neglect of that salutary practice. Our Lord Himself has said that this is the test and the characteristic of those who follow His doctrine: "By this shall men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." (Joh. XIII; 35.)

To be wanting in love therefore towards any one of the members of Christ, is to be wanting in love towards Himself.

This precept then is the cardinal point of the religion which our Divine Lord came to establish. For "love is the fulfiling of the law." (Rom. XIII; 10.) What was it that brought the Son of God down to the earth, to assume this nature of ours? Nothing but love for us. If God then Who is infinitely above us, and has no need whatever of us, has so loved us, can we not love each other for the sake of the same God? The beloved disciple cries out: "My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (I Joh. IV; 11.) We are now called upon to love our brother, not merely on account of the Divine impress on his nature, but because that nature has been, in a manner, deified. When the Second Person of the blessed Trinity assumed our human nature, that nature became the nature of God; and inasmuch as we all partake of that same nature, we are in a manner transformed into the Divinity. "Behold, what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the Sons of God." (I Joh. III; 1.) The great law of fraternal charity is, in consequence, raised to a sublimity of rank and dignity which corresponds to such a Divine origin.

With reason, therefore, does the same apostle assert that the neglect of this duty argues a disregard of the first truths of religion. "Dearly beloved, let us love one another; for charity is of God: and

every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is charity." (I Joh. IV; 7.) But lest this relationship, whereby we are members one of another in Christ, should seem too difficult to realize; in order to stimulate us to the exercise of fraternal charity, let us turn to another reflexion.

3. Each one of those whom we are called on to love has been redeemed and bought by the precious Blood of our Lord. It has been well said that the Cross of Calvary might have borne, for its title and inscription, the words: 'the price of souls;' not merely the souls of men collectively, but of each individual soul. Hence St. Paul asks: Wilt thou scandalize the brother "for whom Christ hath died?" (I Cor. VIII; 11.) There is, perhaps, no principle of our holy religion on which St. Paul so much insists, and from which he draws so many practical deductions, as the intercommunication which exists between all the members of the Church; a principle which is based on the corporate character of the Church, which is considered as the Body of Christ.

Especially in the epistle to the Ephesians, part of which the Church proposes this day to your meditation, he states this doctrine in the most impressive way, and on the most cogent grounds. For he exhorts the faithful to be careful to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." In vain shall we hope for peace, unless there be unity of spirit. Hence, we may judge of the folly of those misguided men who seek to bring about an external reconcilia-

tion, whether between the Church and false sects; or between the principles which guide the Church, and those which rule the corrupt world. These are those spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah, who were for healing the destruction of the daughter of my people to her dishonour; saying, "peace, peace! and there was no peace." (Jer. VI; 14.) "One body and one spirit; as you are called in one hope of your calling." Elsewhere, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle dwells at great length on this truth, that we are all members, one with another, of the same body; and thence deduces the necessity of mutual patience, charity and forbearance. For he says: "As the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body; so also is Christ." (I Cor. XII; 12.) He goes on to remark how the Providence of God has wonderfully combined and organized the various members; "that there might be no schism in the body, but the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the Body of Christ, and members of member." (25, 27.)

Let us then conclude this meditation on fraternal charity with the following reflection: Suffering is the portion of all who would live piously in Christ Jesus in this life. Let us then show our love for our brethren, by suffering with them and for them; that so we may be entitled to share also in the glory, in which the elect members of Jesus Christ shall rejoice for all eternity.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee." (Matt. IX; 2.)

In the gospel of this Sunday, my dear brethren, we meet with another example of the exercise of our Lord's Omnipotence, in the healing of the paralytic. In this example, we also find that that Omnipotence manifested itself in a twofold way: first, by the healing of his corporal malady; and secondly, of his spiritual infirmity. Moreover, on this occasion, Our Lord expressly appealed to the visible miracle of the corporal cure, as evidence of His power to work the invisible miracle of healing the maladies of the soul. The power of working miracles of the first order was exercised by Himself, and permitted by Him to be exercised by His disciples, in order to establish the Divine origin of His mission; and so to lay the foundations of the Church. But the Church being once established, such irrefragable evidence was no longer necessary; and the power of working these miracles ceased to be an ordinary gift of the ministers of the gospel; although that power will always exist in the Church for various ends, such as the manifestation and vindication of the Divine attributes, in the world which God created and governs by His Providence.

But, though this power has ceased to be an ordinary gift of those who are ambassadors for Christ, (II Cor. V; 20) it is far otherwise with the still greater

power of healing the souls of men by the remission of their sins. For this was the direct object and scope of our Lord's mission, to apply the fruits of His redemption to our souls. Hence, were these means and appliances to cease from amongst men, then would it follow that Christ had been crucified in vain, as far as we are concerned. Therefore, in His infinite Wisdom and Goodness He has established a ministry of reconciliation, in the persons of His holy apostles; (18, 19) a ministry which should be divine in its origin and universal in its application, as to person, place, time and subject. All this is clearly contained in the words by which that ministry was conferred: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them, and He said to them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (Joh. XX; 21, 23.) Let us then, with the multitude of this day's gospel, fear and glorify God Who has given such power to men.

The sacrament of penance, which was thus instituted, consists of these three parts! Contrition, Confession and Satisfaction. But since it would be impossible to treat adequately of all these parts within the limits of one discourse, and we have already treated the subject of confession, I propose to confine what I have to say to the subject of Contrition; because it is the most important of the three. I say it is the most important: for the sacrament of penance can be validly administered without con-

fession or satisfaction; when the omission of them is unavoidable, or, though not unavoidable, is, at least, unintentional. Nay, sometimes even, the omission, though neither unavoidable nor unintentional, is excusable, for other reasons. Contrition, however, is an all essential part of the sacrament; and without contrition, the grace of the sacrament cannot be received. Since then, contrition holds the most important place in the dispositions of the penitent, let us devote our first consideration to that subject.

(See Sermons 36 and 37, Vol. III.)

Contrition is defined by the Catechism to be "a hearty sorrow for our sins by which we have offended so good a God, with a firm purpose of amendment." Let us consider the several parts of this definition. 1. Contrition is sorrow. It is often described in Scripture as 'entering into oneself.' It is thus described in the parable of the prodigal son, and it is a phrase which very much helps us to understand the nature of contrition. For, what is the state of the sinful and uncontrite man? It is that of one who has turned away from the only true Good and Happiness, which is God, in order to seek it where it is not to be found; in the wanderings of a misguided intellect, or the indulgence of sensual appetites. As long as he remains in that state, he is the victim of delusions, and imagines himself happy in the enjoyment of those false pleasures. But when, through the workings of Divine Grace, he begins to be contrite, what is his state then? He enters into him-

self. He realizes then, that all these things wherein he placed his happiness, are but the husks that swine did eat: he remembers the good things that he has left in his father's house; he acknowledges his own forlorn estate: he is filled with misery and confusion, beholding himself involved in utter ruin, like a stranded ship, fast breaking up under the blows of the raging waves. This is the first step towards conversion.

This sorrow, of course, must come from the heart. It cannot consist in merely reading a formula out of a book; to come to the tribunal of penance with no other preparation than this, is to make a mockery of the sacrament; and yet, there is much reason to fear that many act in this way. I do not wish to exaggerate the difficulties of conversion. But I am bound to tell you, that an act of contrition is not so easily made, nor is it to be lightly taken for granted. It is a very different thing from an act of faith, or hope, or of the other virtues. To one who has received the divinely-infused habit of faith, it is as easy to elicit an act of faith in the inscrutable mystery of the Holy Trinity, as in a truth so intelligible as the infallibility of the Pope. For it is all as one to him who believes, not because he understands what he believes, but because he reveres the majesty of the God of Truth, and the same may be said of the other virtues. But it is very different in the case of the sinner. For him to be contrite, it is necessary that he should detest that which, till now, he loved, that he should renounce that which, till now, he pursued;

that he should change the whole current of his thoughts and feelings; that he should be, in short, contrite, that is, heart-broken. Now, all this is abundantly possible, by Divine Grace, which is never wanting to any sinner; but no one will say it is easy, and to be assumed as a matter of course.

Again, we must be sorry *for our sins.* Many are sorry for their sinful acts, but not for the sinfulness of them. This is not a subtle distinction, but a matter of daily experience. Remorse is not contrition: for remorse is one of the torments of the damned in hell, and of the reprobate on earth; it is the worm that dieth not; it is anguish of soul for sin, not because sin is an offence against God, but because of the evils that have resulted from sin. Indignation with self is not contrition; for that is, in itself, only a form of pride. It is true that it enters into contrition, as a part; but sorrow which is merely and solely indignation against oneself, is no contrition. For no virtue is wholly opposed to another virtue; and mere indignation is wholly opposed to patience. Our sorrow, then, must be for our sins, because of their sinfulness: that is, because they offend God; and not merely because of the evils which they have brought upon us. Otherwise, we might suppose the case of one who, if there were no punishment for sin, would not be deterred from committing sin by the consideration that it offends God; would it not be monstrous to suppose, that reconciliation can be had with God on such terms as these?

This brings us to the subject of the motive of our

sorrow. The Catechism enumerates amongst the motives which suffice for the sacrament of penance, the fear of hell. Now, this seems at variance with what was said just now, that it will not suffice to be sorry for the consequences of our sins. Let us, then, examine this point; for it is of the greatest importance. You all know, probably, the distinction between contrition and attrition. Contrition is sorrow for sin, conceived from the motive of Charity, of the Divine Goodness. Attrition is sorrow for sin, founded on the consideration of its baseness and of the eternal punishments it entails. Now, theologians teach that attrition is sufficient for justification in the sacrament of penance. But we must remember that this attrition, like all the other acts which dispose to justification, must be supernatural; and that every supernatural act is based upon the love of God: 'being,' as the apostle says, 'rooted and founded in charity.' (Eph. III; 17.) Hence, to be sorry for our sins in any way which implies that we love anything more than God, is no sorrow which will suffice for justification, either in or out of the sacrament of penance.

Those, therefore, who are conscious of past, or habitual carelessness in their preparation for confession, especially in that most important part of it, the act of contrition, I would exhort to consider seriously the momentous consequences which depend on this act being well or ill performed. For nothing whatever can remedy, or compensate for, an imperfect act of sorrow. Such as these would do well to

apply to themselves those words of Ecclesiasticus: "be not without fear about sin forgiven." (Ecclus. V; 5.) At the same time, I would exhort all to make some effectual resolution on this subject, in order that your acts of contrition may be more perfect in the future. To this end, you ought frequently to meditate upon those considerations which are apt to excite true contrition; such as devout reflection on the sufferings and death of our Divine Lord, which were the penalty He paid for our sins: and on the infinite Goodness and Sanctity of God, which have been outraged by our sins. By this means, we may even make our sins serve as stepping-stones to perfection, by grounding us in humility and the love of God. And may He, in His infinite Mercy, give us the comforting assurance of His pardon: "Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee."

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"*I give thanks to my God, always for you; for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus.*" (I Cor. I: 4.)

The apostle, in this Sunday's lesson, puts us in mind of an important duty, which is but too much overlooked by a great many Christians, even of those who pretend to an exact observance of their duties. I refer to the duty of thanksgiving: that we should always give thanks to God for the graces that have

been given to us in Christ Jesus. Let us then consider for a few moments, the nature of the odious vice of ingratitude, and its consequences. I call it odious from a human point of view; for in the sight of God all sin is odious, is the object of His sovereign displeasure.

But in the intercourse which we have with each other, ingratitude, when shown towards an earthly benefactor, is looked upon by all as an especially odious crime. But strange to say, ingratitude towards our heavenly, our only true Benefactor, seems hardly to be regarded as a crime at all: so little is the duty of thanksgiving practiced; so little compunction is felt for the omission of this duty. And yet, we learn from the holy gospels, how grievously this sin wounds the sacred Heart of our Divine Lord. For when He healed the ten lepers, of whom only one returned to give thanks, our Lord broke out into that remonstrance: "Were not ten made clean, and where are the nine?" (Luke XVII; 17.) Lest then we, my dear brethren, should also incur His reproach, let us meditate a little on this subject.

1. First then, what is ingratitude? It is, of course, the negation of gratitude; and gratitude implies at least three things: to be mindful of the benefits received; to thank the benefactor; to make good use of the benefits. Ingratitude, then, must consist, partly at least, in the neglect of these three duties. With regard to the duty of reflecting on the benefits received, faith teaches us that we are indebted to God for everything that we have, both in

the natural and the supernatural order. But because we do not see, with the eye of flesh, that invisible Being Who opens His Hand, and fills with blessing every living creature (Ps. CXLIV; 16), we soon come to forget our obligations, and we say in the pride of our heart: "Our mighty hand, and not the Lord hath done all these things." (Deut. XXXII; 27.) Thus we bring upon ourselves that reproach: "thou hast forgotten the Lord that created thee." (18) In time of trouble and distress, we are ready enough to call upon God to deliver us. But after our deliverance, is it not with us, as it was with the Israelites: "they remembered not the multitude of God's mercies:" (Ps. CV; 7) "they forgot God Who saved them;" (21) "they forgot His benefits, and His wonders that He had shown them." (Ps. LXXVII; 11.)

Were we duly to reflect on this great truth, that we are indebted for everything to the bounty of God, we should not be remiss in rendering Him thanks; much less should we, as we so often do, turn His very gifts against Him, and make them instrumental in offending Him.

For what do the proud, the sensual, the intemperate, the revengeful do, but make the very gifts of God instrumental in ministering to their passions, and in offending Him Who created all things for the manifestation of His glory? Thus, the prophet reproaches the ungrateful people of Israel: "Thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob; neither hast thou laboured about Me, O Israel. Thou hast not offered

Me the ram of thy holocaust; nor hast thou glorified Me with thy victims. But thou hast made me to serve with thy sins." (Is. XLIII; 22, 24.) Let us, then, be ever mindful of God's benefits; and, with the apostle, always give thanks for the graces we have received; and let us show our gratitude by the diligent use which we make of those graces.

2. In the next place, let us consider the enormity of this sin of ingratitude. It deprives God of the only tribute which, as sovereign Lord of all things, He can receive from His creatures. "Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify to thee: I am God thy God." (Ps. XLIX; 7.) And what does the Almighty say that He requires of His people in recognition of His sovereign dominion over them? It is this: "Offer to God the sacrifice of praise; and pay thy vows to the most High." (Ps. XLIX; 14.) This is precisely what the ungrateful will not do: and, thereby, they deprive God of that homage which is His due. More than this; as far as in them lies, the ungrateful defeat the very end for which God created and preserves all things: "the Lord hath made all things for Himself;" (Prov. XVI; 4) that is to say, for His Own Glory. The whole universe of things was created to show forth the Glory of God. Nor, indeed, could He have had any other end in view; seeing that God, as He is the First Cause of all things, is also, of necessity, their final end for which they exist.

The heavens, with all their myriad constellations, the earth, the ocean, the plains, the forests, the

mountains, the rivers, and all the varied species of living things, all show forth, in their degree, the glory of God by their beauty, their vastness, their strength, their usefulness, and the exquisite harmony with which they are all linked together, and governed by those mysterious laws, which God imposed on them, in the beginning. But, though, by their mere existence, they reflect the glory of God, yet they have no mind to contemplate that glory, nor voice to proclaim it. Man alone, for whose use all those things were created, is endowed with an intellect capable of penetrating the designs of Divine Providence; and he alone is endowed with the faculty of speech, by which he may proclaim the glory of God, and give Him thanks for all His wonderful works. Hence, man is constituted, as it were, the mouthpiece of creation; and, if he neglects that duty, he, as much as in him lies, deprives God of that glory to which He is entitled from His creatures, and for which He created them. If "the heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the works of His Hands," (Ps. XVIII; 1) how much more should man, the master-piece of God's creative power, glorify his Maker by the grateful tribute of his praise?

Indeed, ingratitude may be said to be the negation of God. To be ungrateful to Him, is, in a manner, to deny His existence; to deny that He is the source from which all things proceed; the end to which all things aspire. Ingratitude is the outcome of that most deadly sin, pride. As St. Augustine observes:

"What is pride, but the desire of perverted greatness? For greatness is perverted when, leaving Him to Whom the soul ought to cleave as its first beginning and its last end, it makes itself, in a certain way, its own beginning, and its own end. Therefore, he says, "I know that ingratitude is highly displeasing to Thee" St. Bernard, in like manner, says: "Nothing is so displeasing to God, especially in the children of grace, as ingratitude."

3. Let us consider, in the third place, the fatal effects of ingratitude. If you would know what fatal effects this sin works in the Soul, listen to the same St. Bernard: "Ingratitude is the enemy of the soul; it is destructive of merit and of virtue; it is the ruin of grace; a parching wind which dries up the fountains of piety, the dew of mercy, the torrents of grace. To be ungrateful to God for his favours is to deprive oneself of the benefit of them, and to hinder the bestowal of any further graces. For how is it likely that Almighty God will go on conferring His most precious gifts upon those who, by their ingratitude, show themselves so unworthy of what they have received?" To such as these, God cries out by the mouth of His prophet: "because thou hast forgotten Me, bear thou also thy wickedness." (Ecclus. XXIII; 35.) Terrible indeed is the chastisement which God will inflict on them that forget Him. He will in His turn forget them. "I will not add any more to have mercy on the house of Israel; but I will utterly forget them." (Osee. I; 6.)

However lightly we may think of our own forget-

fulness towards God: consider, my brethren, what a terrible thing it is to be forgotten by God; to be no longer regarded by Him with the eye of mercy and compassion; to be blotted out from the Book of Life; even as we have blotted out from our memories the record of His benefits towards us. And yet, this is what our ingratitude must inevitably lead to.

Let us then no longer be remiss in fulfiling this great duty; but with grateful hearts, return thanks to God for all His mercies to us. But how are we to do this? Nothing, my brethren, is easier. God has Himself provided us with a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The holy mass was instituted for this end amongst others: that we might render to God thereby an adequate return for all His benefits. Let us therefore offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually, by devoutly assisting at the sacrifice of the adorable Victim Who is daily immolated on our altar; and, by so doing, we shall render to God thanks worthy of Him, and worthy of all His benefits; for the offering we make, is no other than Himself. Thus shall we adequately fulfil the duty we owe of glorifying God, and we shall draw upon ourselves a continuance of His graces and benefits. Thus, also, as the Church says in her sacred liturgy: by rendering thanks for the gifts we have received, we may be worthy to receive still greater favours from God's all-bountiful Hands.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Gospel.)

"The Kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son." (Matt. XXII; 2.)

1. The King of heaven has made a marriage for His Son. This marriage is the union of God the Son with one human nature—the union of the Word made Flesh—the union of Christ with His spouse, the Church. You have been invited to this wedding. The King has sent His servants to ask you to come; nay, to implore you, to compel you if possible, to come to the feast, that the marriage may be filled with guests. What answer was returned to this kind invitation? They would not come. One would have thought that a monarch who had been insulted so grossly, would have taken instant vengeance for the outrage. But no, the great King, with infinite patience, overlooked the slight; and, apparently attributing the fault rather to His messengers than to the invited guests, sent other servants, with still more pressing invitations, entreating them to come to the banquet. What was the answer to this second invitation? Why, they treated it with the utmost contempt—they went each about his own business: one to his work in the fields; another to his workshop; nay, some of them made scorn of the messengers, ill-treated them, put them to death. Then at length the patience of the King was exhausted. As long as their contempt and their outrages were directed against Himself, He had borne

with them; but when they proceeded to insult and persecute His ministers, then did He smite them with His vengeance, and brought them to utter ruin. He sent them, no longer messengers of peace to invite them to a feast, but messengers of wrath to destroy them and their city.

Thus is Almighty God dealing with each one of you, at the present moment. The marriage is made: the feast is prepared. The Church, the spouse of Christ, is decked out in bridal array; the Eucharistic banquet is spread for you. There, in the holy communion, is to be found everything that can satisfy the heart's desire. All things are ready; only one thing is wanting: there are no guests. They that were invited will not come. But the great King will not submit to this indignity—that the feast which His bounty has prepared, should be thrown away, for want of guests. If they who were first invited will not come, He will invite others in their place. He has patience, indeed, with them, for a time; but when they still continue to reject His invitations, and, especially, when they treat His messengers, whom He sends to remind them of their duty, with contempt and outrage; then, He in His turn, rejects them; He casts them off utterly; and He calls others in their place, who shall be more attentive to His call. Thus St. Paul said to the Jews of Antioch: "since you reject the Word of God, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the gentiles." (Acts. XIII; 46.)

"They that were invited were not worthy." We

must all of us acknowledge that this is our case. We have all of us been invited to the great King's feast; but which of us can say he is worthy? Instead of being invited to a marriage-feast, we were all under sentence of condemnation. By the sin of our first parents, by our own sins, we deserved death and a summons to judgment; and not a gracious invitation to the nuptials of the Lamb. If, then, through the mercy of God, we have escaped this judgment, and received this invitation, with what feelings of gratitude ought we not to accept it? We ought to be overwhelmed with joy, because, instead of punishing us, God has invited us to His choicest favours; with humility at the consciousness of our own unworthiness; with fear lest any coldness or neglect on our part, should cause this invitation to be revoked, and given to another.

For the King will have His marriage filled with guests. If those who were first invited refuse to come, then He sends His ministers into the highways and by-ways, to gather together all that they find, both good and bad; or, as St. Luke expresses it, the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame; so that, at all events, the room may be filled. And so God knows how, from the stones of the streets to raise up children to Abraham, when the children themselves are unworthy. (Luke III; 8.) The Jews persuaded themselves that they were God's chosen people, and that there was no salvation for others. But we know how the Jews were rejected; though not until they had first rejected Christ; and

how the apostles went into all the corners of the earth, into the high-ways and by-ways of the world; and from every tribe and tongue, they gathered together a Church, composed of all sorts and conditions of men—rich and poor, learned and ignorant, master and slave, the dissolute and vile, as well as those whose previous lives had been a preparation for the gospel. All these were gathered into the apostolic net; and formed into a Church which became, in the words of St. Paul, the spouse of Christ, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and the marriage was filled with guests.

2. But there is yet another mystery to unfold. Of those who, after all, came to that banquet, one was found who had not on a wedding-garment. We have heard what was his doom. What then is meant by this wedding garment, the want of which brought on such terrible consequences? It is that white robe which you all received at your baptism, with the solemn admonition: "receive this white garment, and see thou carry it, without stain, before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ; that thou mayest have eternal life." That white robe signifies the Sanctifying grace of God, with which we are endowed at our baptism; which we are bound to carry with us during life, without which we can never sit down to the banquet of eternal bliss. All who belong to the communion of the Church, are guests at the marriage-feast of the Son of God; because all such are entitled and invited to participate in the sacraments and suffrages of the Church. But,

there is one essential condition attached to this invitation—we must be clothed in the wedding-garment of divine grace. We must not only belong to the Church externally, we must also belong to the soul of the Church, by participating in that spiritual life with which the Church herself lives; the life which she draws from the Holy Spirit, Who will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins." (Wisd. I; 4.)

Again, we may consider the marriage-feast to be, in a special sense, that Eucharistic banquet, in which our Lord enters into a still closer union with the faithful. To this feast we are all invited in those words: "he that eatheth Me, the same also shall live by Me." (Joh. VI; 58.) Nay, we are compelled to come in those words: "except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you." (54) He has ordained this sacrament to be the Food of our souls, which, without it, must inevitably perish. "Thou didst feed Thy people with the Food of angels; and gavest them Bread from heaven prepared without labour." (Wisd. XVI; 20.) But, to this Banquet also, it is necessary that we should come clad in the wedding-garment of Divine grace and charity. They who presume to sit down at this feast without that wedding-garment, incur that awful condemnation of the apostle: "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself. (I Cor. XI; 29.)

Hence, there is a double warning in this day's

gospel: first, against those who stay away from the sacraments altogether, under the frivolous pretexts of worldly cares and occupations: secondly, against those who come, indeed, but without due preparation. Both these shall feel the vengeance of the great King. They shall be bound hand and foot, and cast into the utter darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. From all which we are to conclude that the care of our souls must be the first business of our lives; we must obey the Divine call, and sacrifice everything; husband or wife, house or children, kindred, or property, or reputation; everything must be sacrificed to the interests of our immortal souls. If, then, you have hitherto despised the invitation of the great King from any such motives and considerations, and turned your backs upon the holy sacraments, now, at least resolve to repent and amend; resolve no longer to defraud your soul of its proper nourishment; but, leaving all worldly cares and interests to take care of themselves, set about, earnestly and diligently, that task which alone is worthy of your attention. (Luke X; 42.) For 'one thing is necessary.' And if we have done that one thing well, it matters nothing about all the rest. We have but one soul; and the Salvation of that soul must be secured at all cost, and at every sacrifice.

Again, let those who do frequent the holy sacraments, examine themselves, and see whether they are duly arrayed in the wedding-garment of grace and charity; whether it be the robe of baptismal

innocence, unsullied by sin, or the robe of penance, that has been dyed in the Blood of the Lamb, through the sacrament of penance. Let us not deceive ourselves on this subject. Those are terrible words of our Divine Lord, however they may be explained: "Many are called; but few are chosen." Many are invited to the sacrament of the altar; but few are found worthy of it. I say not this to deter you from coming: God forbid! For most true is it, that the same damnation awaits those who come not, as those who come unworthily, But I would exhort you to bestow all your pains in preparing to receive that Divine Guest, Who is able to heal all your wounds, to fill you with every grace, and finally, to bring you to that heavenly supper, where you shall feed on the contemplation of the Divine Majesty; whose beauty and sweetness "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." (I Cor. II; 9.)

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbour." (Eph. IV; 25.)

The sin of lying is, unhappily, universally prevalent: so prevalent, indeed, that very many seem almost to have forgotten that it is a sin. They seem to feel no compunction or remorse, when they commit it; and they make no effort to get rid of this evil

habit which they have contracted. But especially, there is perhaps no sin which, when committed by Catholics, gives such scandal to our separated brethren, as the sin of lying. For when the people of this country lost the faith, and with it the knowledge of revealed truth, they did still manage to retain some portion of the primitive tradition; and conspicuous amongst these fragments, is a certain sensitiveness, leading them to esteem truthfulness, and to abhor falsehood. Still, I am far from thinking that Protestants can boast of any superiority over Catholics in this respect. What it amounts to, is just this: Non-Catholics, in their secret consciences, acknowledge that the Catholic Church teaches and practices a far higher morality than their own. Hence they are more shocked and scandalized when they perceive such faults in a Catholic, than they would be if the delinquent were one of their own communion. However this may be, it so happens that it is the lot of many children of the Catholic Church to serve Protestant masters and mistresses, in domestic and other occupations. Now, wherever we go, we shall find that these people are amazed and shocked at the utter disregard of truth shewn by their servants; and at the facility with which they concoct a lie to serve their purpose; and they, very unreasonably, go on to attribute this failing to the character of Catholic teaching. Since they cannot believe that teacher to be sent by God who inculcates falsehood, a huge stumbling-block is thereby thrown in their way, to hinder them from examining

the real teaching of the Church; so that their conversion is rendered difficult, if not impossible.

No one, I think, will deny that this is a great evil; and one which we should do our utmost to remove out of the midst of us. We know that the Catholic Church not only teaches truth and truthfulness, but that she is the very pillar and foundation of truth. (I Tim. III; 15.) We know that she condemns falsehood as a sin, under whatever pretext it may be uttered. And yet, notwithstanding, her children are addicted to this vice, to an alarming degree. The real reason for it, of course, is to be found in the way in which children are brought up by their parents; in the utter indifference shewn by parents, when this vice begins to manifest itself in their children, as it is certain to do, at a very early age, unless they are carefully watched; and, in the gross neglect of parents to take any measures to correct and extirpate this evil habit, when once it has laid hold of their children.

Let us just consider the method, if method it can be called, which prevails among many parents in the matter of bringing up children. First of all, a child is not taught, as it should be, to consider a lie as a sin against God. Unless the lie be in some way hurtful to the parents, either they take no notice of it, or perhaps, they even laugh at it. The consequence is, that the child can never be made to understand that God can be displeased with that at which its parents are amused, or which they at least regard with indifference. If, on the other hand, the

lie causes some inconvenience to the parents, as generally happens, they will, most likely, punish the child; but how? In such a way, as to make it clear to the child, (and children are very quick at observing such things), that it is punished, not for the sin it has committed, but for the mischief it has caused. Now, what is the effect of the punishment? Why, the child has learned nothing as to the sinfulness of lying: but has learned some cunning expedient, by which it may evade such punishment in future. In other words, the result is, that the child becomes more expert in lying.

Again, parents, by their own folly, actually encourage their children in lying, without, of course, intending to do so: but they do so, all the same. Children are very quick of perception, in all that concerns the indulgence of their evil propensities; and when a child finds that, by carrying home some tale, more or less false, its parents will be led to do something which the child wants, whether it be to stay away from school, or to pick a quarrel with some other persons; why, of course, this is a strong inducement to the child, to invent such stories. The foolish parents, instead of strictly investigating the truth of these tales, and instead of punishing their children for their wicked falsehood, at once give credence to their children, and seem to think those tales true, merely because they are told by their own children.

Besides this, there is also the bad example of parents themselves. The parents have, in all probability, been brought up in the same way, and are

themselves addicted to this vice. The children are continually witnessing the untruths and deceptions which the father and mother are practicing on one another, and on their neighbours; and, as a matter of course, the children soon learn to acquire the habit, which they see their parents practice without any apparent scruple.

Such, my brethren, are only some very few of the causes which lead to the prevalence of this sin amongst us. Let us now consider how and why it is a sin: and some few of the motives which should lead us to abhor this vice and to shun it. A lie is a sin: any and every lie is a sin; no matter what its nature may be, or on what pretext it is made. It is always a sin; and, as such, is never lawful, under any circumstances whatsoever. So much so, that the Church teaches that if, by telling one little harmless lie, we could release all the lost souls in hell, and place them in Paradise, it would not be lawful to tell that lie; and it would be blasphemy to say that we could. For a lie is essentially opposed to the Divine attribute by which God is the sovereign Truth; to whom, therefore, every lie must be the object of His sovereign displeasure.

What, then, do we mean by a lie? A lie is some word or sign, by which we signify what we know to be untrue, with the intention to deceive. All these conditions are requisite to constitue a lie. 1. It is a word or sign. For it is not necessary to open our lips to tell a lie; we may tell it by our gestures, or by the expression of our countenance. 2 We signify

that which we know to be untrue. Hence, if we make a statement, which is, in reality, false, but believing it to be true, it is no lie. On the other hand, if we make a statement which is, in reality true, but believing it to be false, that would be a lie. 3. With the intention to deceive. Hence, tales of fiction, fables, figures of speech, jokes are not lies, because there is no intention to deceive. When it is said that a lie is always sinful, it is not meant, of course, that all lies are equally sinful. For the sinfulness of a lie will depend, for its gravity, on the malice with which it is uttered, and the foreseen consequences which it involves. Hence, there are grievous lies and venial lies.

But, whether grievous or venial, every lie is a sin; and it is sad to think that many, perhaps, on the ground of this distinction, make so light of venial lies, utter them without concern, and make no effort to overcome the evil habit. But, my brethren, the Royal Psalmist inspired by the Spirit of God, has written these awful words: "Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity; Thou wilt destroy all that speak a lie." (Ps. V; 7.) The wise man also says: "he that speaketh lies shall be punished." (Prov. XIX;9.) Devise not a lie against thy brother; neither do the like against thy friend." (Ecclus. VII; 13.) "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." (Prov. XII; 22.) "The mouth that belieth, killeth the soul." (Wisd. I; 11.) Again, hear what the apostle says in this day's lesson: "Put on the new man who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of

truth. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbour; for we are members one of another." In these words the apostle puts forward two motives for adhering to the truth, and eschewing falsehood: 1. Because we are created in the likeness of God, Who is the sovereign Truth, in Whom there is no lie. Not only were we created; but we were also regenerated in the likeness of His Son, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Hence, to deviate from the truth is to go astray from God; and to take part with the devil, who is a liar and the father of lies. Amongst those whom St. John saw excluded from the heavenly Jerusalem, is "every one that loveth and maketh a lie." (Apoc. XXII; 15.)

2. The second motive is, that we are members one of another. Hence, we are bound to love one another as our own members, as ourselves; and, wilfully to deceive our neighbour, is to violate the great precept of fraternal charity, which is an essential part of the great Commandment of the law. Strive, then, my dear brethren, to put down this great scandal; to bring up your children in the love of truth and truthfulness, in a horror of falsehood; so that it may be almost impossible for them to frame their lips to utter a lie; instead of its being, as it is with some, the commonest impulse to which they give way. Strive to reverence more and more the awful majesty of Divine Truth; and to show yourselves thereby true children of God, and brethren of our Lord, created in justice and holiness of truth.

Let every one deal truthfully with his neighbour, as becomes members of the one mystical Body of Christ, and as joint-inheritors of that heavenly Kingdom, which is built on the solid foundation of Truth.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"*The ruler saith to him, 'Lord come down before that my son die.'*" (St. John. IV; 49)

Our Blessed Lord had come back again from Judea into Galilee, after spending the Paschal Feast at Jerusalem. He passed through Samaria on His way, and had His memorable conversation with the woman of Sychar at Jacob's well. And now He returned to Cana of Galilee where He had worked His first Miracle. Perhaps He went to stay in the very house where He had made the water wine, and had brought joy and blessing to the newly wedded pair.

And while he was there an important visitor came to seek Him. We do not know for certain what or who this "ruler" or "nobleman" was, but it seems probable from the original Greek that he was an officer in the service of Herod Antepas, tetrarch of Galilee, who was popularly known as King. It has been suggested that he was Chusa, Herod's steward, for we find in St. Luke that "Joanna the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward," (Luke VIII; 3) was among the holy women who ministered to Him of their

substance. Very likely, her gratitude and devotion had been aroused by the wonderful miracle wrought on her little child by Jesus at Cana.

However this may be, the ruler, (as our version calls him) journeyed from Capharnaum to Cana, to beg our Blessed Lord to come and heal his boy, who was at the point of death. It would seem that only dire necessity had driven him to Jesus, that it was the dread of losing this much-loved child that forced him to seize this last hope, when all had failed, for the boy was "at the point of death."

He had no great faith in our Lord's power, no faith at all (we imagine) in His claim to be the promised Messias; but the reputation of the miracles of healing worked by this new Prophet, had made him come, almost against his will, to seek His aid. Our Lord looks at the poor father with great compassion, but with some sternness. "Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not," He says to him. Evidently, he was very different from the Gentile centurion, whose faith had both astonished and gladdened the Sacred Heart. The poor father, however, can think of nothing but his dying boy—"Lord, come down, before that my son die," he pleads. His anxiety is so deep and so real, that the compassionate Heart of the Saviour is touched. He looks at him, and the look in His wonderful eyes pierces deep into the father's soul. He says to him, in accents such as this ruler has never heard before, so solemn and so full of authority are they: "Go thy way; thy son liveth."

He cannot doubt any more. We can imagine that he sinks on his knees at our Lord's feet, and tries to thank Him; and then he turns, and wends his way home again, to the home that he had left that morning so sad and desolate.

But how different a man is he from the almost distraught suppliant who rode in hottest haste to Cana, a few hours back! Then he was full of fears and hardly allowed himself to hope. He feared that he should arrive too late to bring the Healer to his child's bed-side in time to save the young life; he feared too lest it should be after all but a wild-goose chase, and that there would prove to be no help in the much-vaunted Wonder-worker of Nazareth. Over and over again he was tempted to turn back, and at least not deprive himself of the consolation of assisting at the child's last moments. But he had hurried on, for this chance could not be thrown away. He could not get out of his mind the sight of the little wasted fevered form, gasping for breath on his pallet, and the stricken, dry-eyed mother, who knelt by him, a very image of despair. And so he had hurried into the Saviour's presence, hardly able to speak from sheer anxiety, and had flung himself at the feet of Jesus and made his urgent appeal.

And now, how strangely different he felt! Surely Jesus had wrought two miracles when He said those words of comfort—"Thy son liveth." Somehow or other, he felt, he knew it was true. The look in those calm eyes had soothed his pain, and taken away for ever all his doubts and fears. What though the

Prophet would not return with him, he felt that all was well. He did not even hurry home, but went slowly and leisurely, as one who is without anxiety.

It was seven o'clock in the evening that Jesus had sent him away with these words of comfort, and it was not till well on in the next day that he came near home. And then he met his servants, and before he could even see their joyful faces, or hear their cries of welcome, he knew that they brought good news.

"Thy son liveth," they cry out to him, as they salaam before him, and it was the echo of the words of Jesus that are ever ringing in his heart. Yes, he lives, and more than that, he must be on the mend, he feels sure of it. And so he asks the time when the change came. "When did he begin to get better? At what hour precisely?" And they tell him that it was yesterday evening at seven o'clock, that he was cured. Yes, the change had been sudden and complete, far more complete than the father could ever have dared to hope—"The fever left him" altogether, he was cured, he was well.

They told the glad father that the little one would come dancing out to meet him, as of old, as soon as he had heard the clatter of his horse's hoofs in the distance. We can imagine what joy and thankfulness flooded the ruler's heart. So much more than he had dared either to ask or to hope for had been granted him.

His heart overflowed with gratitude to the good Saviour who had thus shown forth His mercy

and His power, and from that moment he was numbered among his most fervent disciples. "And himself believed, and his whole house." Not content with accepting Jesus as his Messias and his Lord, he enrolled all his family and household in the Master's service, and if it be true that he was Chusa, Herod's steward, then we know that he gladly allowed his wife to follow Jesus on his missionary journeys and to minister to Him of their substances. And we may be sure that among the little ones who were brought to Jesus to bless, was the little child of Capharnaum who had thus been snatched from the very jaws of death. And so our Blessed Lord makes Himself known to men, as the Healer of their souls and bodies, the all-merciful and most tender Saviour, whose delight it is to heal our sicknesses and carry our sorrows.

And we see how He prizes the faith of His disciples, and how He does all He can to excite that faith in those who know Him but imperfectly. He is so kind, that He does not drive away from Him those who come to Him just for what they can get; but on the contrary, He welcomes them and consoles them and grants them their hearts' desire, in order that He may entice them to believe in Him more perfectly, and surrender themselves to Him more wholeheartedly. And we know, too, that in our troubles we can go to him with the most perfect confidence, without fear of being repulsed or treated unkindly, for His heart is full of compassion, and He makes our sorrows His own. But he would also have us know

that, above all things, He values a firm and steadfast faith in His power and in His promises—and if we have much to ask Him, let us take care that we come with great faith and confidence in His goodness. This ruler's faith was weak, but at least it brought him from Capharnaum to Cana to seek out Jesus. He can hardly believe that the Healer can save his child unless He comes down to his bedside, and it is evident that the idea that Jesus could raise the dead, has never even occurred to him. But our Lord does not drive him away because his faith is not perfect; on the contrary, he receives him with the utmost kindness, in order to perfect and increase his faith. And we have seen how He succeeds in this.

So if we feel that our faith in Jesus and our confidence in the power of prayer is not sufficiently strong, let us earnestly beg our Blessed Lord to increase and strengthen it. And we may be sure that this is a prayer which He loves to hear and answer, and that He will grant it, even if He has to work a miracle to ensure it.

And let us learn too, not to be afraid to ask great things of our Lord. We do not get what we desire, because we are afraid to ask for it, or because we ask without faith, and without any expectation of being heard.

Let us make our prayer to-day, that of that other poor afflicted father in the Gospel, *Domine, adange fidem meam.* Lord, increase my faith—"

(Dom Bede Camm O. S. B.)

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Lesson.)

"See therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time; because the days are evil." (Eph. V; 15, 16.)

If one were asked to point out on what the Church depended chiefly for her sanctification and well being; one might answer that it depended, under the grace of God, on the Christian family—on the condition of each one of those innumerable families, of which each one of you is a member. For, as grace is universally founded on nature, so, especially, is the Church built upon the foundations of the Christian family. Wherever, therefore, the family is disorganized and corrupt, there religion is necessarily overthrown; whilst, when the family is well-ordered and pure, there religion flourishes. I purpose therefore, saying a few words about the Christian family; the more especially as it is evident that the spiritual desolation which prevails in many homes, is owing, not so much to individual depravity, as to the neglect of those conditions which constitute the Christian family.

For I do not suppose that many of these negligent Catholics neglect their duties because they like to do so; or, that they would not much rather live like Christians, and practice the duties of Christians. They say that such are their sentiments; and I believe them. Then why do they live, as they do, practically heathen? Simply because they have

not taken care to surround themselves with those conditions, which are required for leading a Christian life. They have never thought of constructing a Christian household; and where there is no Christian family, there can be no Christian life.

But, again, as there can be no Christianity without a Christian family, so there cannot be any Christian family without a Christian home. A home is as necessary to a family, as a hive to the bee. As the bee cannot store its honey without a hive, so neither can a family exercise its religion without a home. This then is the explanation of the riddle why there is such utter forgetfulness of all religious duties, that the Church is half-empty, the altar of God desolate, that the children grow up in the same neglect of their religious duties, and walk in their parents' footsteps. The mystery is solved the moment you walk into their homes or rooms. As the home is, so will the family be. And yet, what sort of homes does one but too frequently find? 'Home' is much too sacred a name by which to call them. They are rather to be compared to the stalls in which beasts lie down at night, mere shelter from wind and rain. But of all the sacred and holy influences with which a Christian home should be sanctified, these places are wholly destitute. There one sees nothing but dirt and rags, disorder and destruction, waste and destitution. Allow me to sketch, in the briefest outline, a picture of the kind of home of which I had experience, by the score, during my missionary career; and I have no doubt that the picture will find its counter-

part in every part of the country. Four filthy walls; a broken window stuffed with rags; rickety furniture; dirty crockery; all kinds of uncleanness; half-naked children sprawling in filth; fragments of victuals left to waste; a poisoned atmosphere; a roaring fire blazing half-way up the chimney, when there are coals to heap on; a black, dirty grate, when there are none; and to fill up the picture, a drunken father, and a slovenly, gossiping mother. You yourselves may judge whether this picture is exaggerated or not.

Now, I ask, how can piety and religion flourish in such an atmosphere as this? It may do so by a miracle; but miracles do not happen every day. Let us see, then, if we cannot remedy this deplorable state of things. What advice shall we give these poor people, whose faults, I am sure, spring more from ignorance than malice? We cannot find better advice than that which is given us by St. Paul, in this Sunday's lesson. In that passage, he gives us several instructions as to the conduct of a Christian family. He lays down, then, as the conditions: (1) prudence, (2) sobriety, (3) subordination, (4) spiritual joy or cheerfulness. If we could only enforce the observance of these rules, we should speedily effect a wonderful transformation in people's homes.

1. Prudence means forethought. It is the chief of the cardinal virtues; which means, it is one of the hinges on which Christian conduct hangs, as a door hangs upon its hinges. If one hinge be broken, the weight of the door will soon break down the others;

and the door becomes a wreck and a ruin; as you will find out, if you walk into one of the homes which I have described to you. So, also, where there is no prudence, all other virtues will soon collapse. Now, prudence prescribes the right ordering of a Christian household; which does not consist in living from hand to mouth; nor in working for a day or week, and spending the earnings at the day's end, or week's end. It means laying by for the future; living within one's means, however limited they may be; and saving something for future contingencies. Of course, where the earnings are small and casual, this cannot be done without great carefulness and economy. Hence, parents should practice this economy themselves, and teach it to their children; never allowing them to waste a crumb of bread, or to destroy the value of a pin. They should not yield to all their wants and demands; but teach them to practice self-denial. Wherever economy is strictly and consistently practiced, any family, no matter how poor it may be, would be enabled to live decently and even comfortably, and also be able to make some provision for the future.

Prudence teaches us not only to do certain things, but to avoid other things. It would take me too far to go into this matter; but, let it suffice to say that the greatest enemies of prudence are the publican and the pawnbroker. Every visit the drunken father pays to the public-house; every visit the slatternly mother pays to the pawn-shop, is digging a mine under the Christian home, which will, eventually, bring about its ruin.

2. The next rule is sobriety. This is another cardinal virtue, on which the Christian home hinges; without which it will go to wreck and ruin. Picture before your mind's eye the drunkard's home; the bruised and battered wife; the naked, half-starved children; the desolate hearth; whilst he, the father of a family, created by God to His Own image and likeness, is defiling that image in the pollution of the public-house, amongst a blasphemous and obscene crew of drunkards. On the other hand, picture to yourselves a home, which is a temple of Christian temperance and sobriety; where the father of the family finds his enjoyment, not in the noisy revels of the drunken debauch, but in the hallowed circle of the domestic hearth; where, in the bosom of his family, he offers to God the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise.

3. The Christian family needs, in the third place, subordination. No society can hold together without due order and subjection to one authority. So is it with the family. Unless the wife be duly submissive to her husband in all lawful things; unless the children are brought up from their earliest infancy to be obedient; unless their parents watch over them and correct their faults; unless they train them up in the strictest truthfulness, honesty and purity; unless they bring them up in the practice of Christian virtues, and in the exercise of Christian piety; it is vain to hope that there can be a truly Christian home; or that a Christian family can exist under any other conditions.

4. Lastly, a Christian home is the abode of Spiritual joy and cheerfulness. The apostle says that we should speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. There is nothing melancholy or sad about Christian piety. The Christian home is the abode of mirth and cheerfulness, because it is the abode of innocence. In the Christian home and family, there is a spirit of joy and light-heartedness, which springs from the testimony of a good conscience, and which manifests itself in the way which the apostle denotes. For when the heart is full of joy, it is sure to express itself in music and melody. Thus is the Christian home also a Christian temple, which has its altar, round which the family is gathered; of which the father is the high-priest. It is in this sense, that St. Peter declares that every Christian belongs to a royal priest-hood. "But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people." (I Pet. II; 9.) For there, in the bosom of his family, he is anointed by God to offer to him the sacrifice of praise, uttered by the lips of his little ones. There, at that family altar, he makes known his petitions to the Most High, and draws down those graces and blessings of which they stand in need.

Such, my brethren, is the Christian home; the home of prudence, of carefulness, of thriftiness, of temperance and moderation, of order and discipline, of cheerfulness and joy. It is also the training-school of virtue, the sanctuary of piety, and the

very threshold of Paradise, to whose blessed mansions may God conduct all those who truly fear and love Him. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Gospel.)

"*One was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents.*" (Matt. XVIII; 24.)

In the parable which forms the subject of this Sunday's gospel, our Divine Lord teaches us that we are all of us debtors to the Divine Justice. For "what have we, that we have not received?" (I Cor. IV; 7.) All that we can claim as our own are our sins; but whatever of good there may be in us is wholly and entirely the gift of God, a talent entrusted to us by Him; and for which He will exact a most strict account at the day of judgment. Our soul, with all its faculties; our body, with all its endowments; our whole being, with all its power and energies; the food we eat; the air we breathe; the light that shines upon us; and, beyond all this, the gifts of grace; the holy sacraments; the atoning sacrifice; the power of prayer; the communion of saints; all these, and a thousand more, are the gratuitous gifts of God, which make us what we are, and without which we should be nothing, and worse than nothing. Most true is it, therefore, that we stand in God's great account-book, as debtors to Him, to the extent

of ten thousand talents; that is to say, of a sum which is beyond all proportion greater than we can pay.

When, therefore, we go before the judgment-seat of God, as go we must some day, we must be prepared to hear the Great Judge interrogate us in this wise: "I cleansed you from all sin in the waters of baptism, and gave you the spotless robe of sanctifying grace, the gifts of faith, hope and charity. I bade you wear that robe, and bring it unstained before my judgment-seat. Where is that white robe; and what mean these foul stains of sin upon your soul? You promised then, to renounce the devil, with all his works and pomps. Behold, the devil stands at your side, and claims you for his own. He says that you have served him all your life; and now you must be his slave forever; and, in this, the father of lies speaks the truth. I sealed you with the gift of My holy Spirit in your confirmation, by which you professed yourself my soldier, to fight My battles against My enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. Where is that seal? It is there, indeed, but only to give testimony against you, that you have deserted My standard, and gone over to the enemy.

You have crucified Me, and served the world. You have obeyed the lusts of the flesh; you have listened to the suggestions of the devil. For you I was nailed to the cross, and suffered a long agony and a cruel death; for your sake I left a perpetual commemoration of My Passion in the holy Mass, at which I allowed you to assist, that you might reap

the fruits of My atonement. What have you done in return? You have turned your back on My sacrifice, which was offered daily on My altars; you cared not to come and draw waters from those fountains of salvation. (Is. XII; 3.) And, if you did come, with what dispositions did you come? And where are the fruits which you might have gathered from those holy mysteries? For your sake, I devised a still more marvellous mystery of love: the sacrament of My Body and Blood. Not content with giving that Body to be crucified for you, and that Blood to be spilt for you; I must needs make you partaker of My Body and Blood, that you might be transformed into Myself, and become all divine; that you might live with My life, and receive into your soul and body the seed of eternal life, and of a glorious resurrection. What profit have you derived from so great a gift?

Lest you should be afraid to approach Me, I was pleased to command you to receive this sacrament, under pain of eternal condemnation. Yet you have neglected and despised it; you have even profaned it by your irreverence and unworthiness. Truly, you have crucified Me anew; you have trampled My Blood under your feet, and deemed the Blood of the Testament unclean, whereby you were sanctified. (Hebr. X; 29.) You plead your weakness, and your many temptations. I knew your weakness and your temptations; but My grace was sufficient for you; and My grace was to be had for the asking. You had but to pray, and all things would have been

possible to you. But you would not pray; and, therefore, you were overcome. And even if you fell into sin, I provided for you the holy sacrament of penance, in which I offered you My forgiveness, no matter how many or how grievous your sins might be, were the debt you owed Me ten thousand talents; I was ready to forgive it all, and to restore you to My grace and friendship. But you would not. Not only did I invite you to do penance, but I commanded you; and you still refused to obey the precept of My Church. You would not go to confession, in order that you might be at liberty to go on in your sins; and now there is no forgiveness for you.

I sent My priests to warn you, to instruct you, to threaten you, to allure you; but you turned a deaf ear to them; perhaps you insulted them; but I would have you know, that in despising them, you despised Me. And now it is My turn, "I also will laugh in your destruction; and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared." (Prov. I; 26.) I gave you My own Mother, to be your mother; I furnished you with the guardianship of My blessed angels to keep you in your ways. (Ps. XC; 11.) I provided you with the intercession and holy example of all My saints; and you cared nothing for all these things. You preferred the society of the world, and its vicious example. Now you shall be forever excluded from this blessed company." My dear brethren, this is not a fanciful picture; there is in it nothing overdrawn or exaggerated. It is a faithful picture of the lives of but too many so-called Chris-

tians, and of the judgment they may expect. All that I have said bears no proportion to the gifts and graces which God has showered upon you, or is prepared to bestow upon you, if you will but show yourselves worthy of those graces. For all and every one of those graces, you will have to give a strict account. "To whom much is given, of him much will be required." (Luke XII; 48.)

What, then, are we to do? We must now and at once, come to a settlement with our Divine Creditor. For now we may appeal, like the servant in the gospel, to His compassion. He is ready to forgive us all the debt, great as it may be, if only we throw ourselves at His Feet, and beseech His mercy. But, if we delay to make this settlement until we appear before His throne of judgment, then it will be too late. There will then be no means of appealing to His compassion; but we shall have to submit to the rigour of His Justice. Now, He is a God of mercy and compassion,then, He will be a stern and unrelenting Judge. Let us then, now whilst we have the time, throw ourselves at His Feet, and cry out with the Psalmist: "O Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight, no man living shall be justified." (Ps. CXLII; 2.) He will not reject our petition; but on one condition; if, with the servant in the gospel, we implore His patience and compassion, we must seek to deserve that compassion by the solemn promise: "I will pay thee all."

It will avail us nothing to regret the neglect and abuse of God's graces, if we do not make a firm

resolution to make a better use of them in the future. If we have been hitherto unprofitable servants, we must now set our house in order, and be diligent in every good work; so that we may become good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (I Pet. IV; 10.) We must renew our baptismal vows, and keep them faithfully. We must re-enlist ourselves under the standard of Jesus Christ, and fight manfully against all our spiritual foes. We must be more frequent and fervent in assisting at the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice; and in the Communion of the Body and Blood of our Lord, which is an inexhaustible fountain of life and strength in this land of exile. We must be filled with the spirit of prayer, praying always and in all places, that God may deliver us from evil. We must have recourse to confession, as often as we fall into sin, and prepare ourselves diligently for that sacrament. We must renounce the sinful conversation of the world, and learn henceforth to make our companionship with the ever-blessed Mother of God, with the saints and angels, with whom we hope to be, one day, associated in heaven. By so doing, we shall effectually move our Lord's compassion; and there is nothing which He will not forgive us.

There is but one more condition: and it is that which our blessed Lord principally intended, when He uttered this parable: namely, that we, in our turn, must forgive every one who has injured or offended us; and that from our inmost heart. Then, when we have extended to others the forgiveness

which we claim for ourselves, He will welcome us to the Arms of His Compassion: and, the heavier the debts, the greater will be His loving compassion for us. O let us, then, no longer delay; but whilst we have time and opportunity, be reconciled to our Lord; let us pay the great debt we owe Him, in that way in which He wishes to be paid; by our love and fidelity. And He, in His turn, will not fail to bestow on us the eternal recompense of a never-fading crown of glory. (I Pet. V; 4.)

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Lesson.)

"Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil." (Eph. VI; 11.)

"Son," says the wise man, "when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation." (Ecclus. II; 1.) Many people seem to think that temptation is sin, or a punishment for sin, or a hindrance to piety. Nothing can be more mistaken than this notion. Temptation is an essential part of spiritual discipline. For, "he that hath not been tried, what manner of things doth he know?" (Ecclus. XXXIV; 11.) Our Lord Himself Who wished to be like unto us in all things, except only sin, consented to be tempted; so that "wherein He Himself hath suffered and

been tempted, He is able to succour them also that are tempted." (Hebr. II; 18.) What, indeed, is temptation, but the trial and proof of virtue? And what is virtue worth, unless it has been exposed to the ordeal of temptation? It is only those that have been tried, who shall receive the crown of life; a crown which, as St. Augustine says, no one shall obtain, unless he has conquered; and no one can conquer, unless he has fought; and no one can fight, unless he has an enemy and temptations to deal with.

But though temptations are inevitable and necessary, and therefore to be expected, as a matter of course; they are not, on that account, such as that we can afford to despise or overlook them. On the contrary, the apostle warns us in this day's lesson, that our conflict is not with flesh and blood, but with the spirits of wickendess in the high places, with the rulers of the world of this darkness. Hence, the conflict is of a most arduous character; and we need spiritual arms and spiritual armour, such as the apostle describes. Let us then consider a few of the rules which spiritual writers lay down as being useful to guide us in the Christian warfare.

1. The first and golden rule is that which our Lord Himself has prescribed in those words: "watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. XXVI; 41.) Just as an army which does not post sentinels to keep vigilant watch at all the out-posts, will certainly be surprised and defeated by the enemy; so will it be with the Christian who does not keep vigilant guard over all his senses, over all

his thoughts, words and acts; he will, sooner or later, be surprised by the enemy, and fall into sin. Again, as nothing that we can do will be of any avail without Divine grace; hence, to our watching we must add prayer. "Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it." (Ps. CXXVI; 1.) By prayer alone shall we be able to say: "The Lord is my light, and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Ps. XXVI; 1.) Without prayer, we shall inevitably fall; with prayer, we shall certainly conquer. For our Lord has Himself promised: "Ask, and you shall receive." (Joh. XVI; 24.) "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you." (23) But then we must lend our own co-operation to Divine grace, in order that it may be effectual: "resist the devil, and he will fly from you." (James IV; 7.)

2. Another rule which it is absolutely necessary to observe is, to avoid the occasions of sin. For what would be the use of praying that we may not enter into temptation, when we deliberately seek the very thing from which we pray to be delivered? Such as these will surely fall. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it." (Ecclus. III; 27.) Not only must we avoid the outward occasions of sin: but we must also, and especially, be always on our guard against that domestic foe, whom we can never in this life shake off; but whom we are bound to attack all the days of our life; I mean the flesh, with its evil inclinations and desires. For who amongst us is not compelled to acknowledge with the apostle:

"I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members." (Rom. VII; 23.) We may, then, thus sum up the hints which have been given; and which will guide us in our co-operation with Divine grace, so as to overcome the temptations which are incidental to our spiritual life. We must be firmly persuaded that we shall have to undergo temptations, until we have drawn our last breath. Hence, we must always be on our guard against them; more especially at the time when we seem to be most free from them. As, in earthly warfare, it is a very common device for the enemy to withdraw his forces, in order that he may delude his opponents into a false security; so is it in the spiritual warfare, where we have to deal with a much more crafty and subtle strategist; for our enemy, the devil, uses the same stratagem in order to induce us to relax our vigilance, by a deceitful appearance of a cessation of hostilities; and thereby lay ourselves open to some attack which he is meditating against us.

3. A third rule to be observed is that, when we find ourselves assaulted by temptation, we should make an act of the love of God, or of the particular virtue against which we are tempted. This is a most effectual remedy against temptation; for not only does it divert our attention from the sinful imagination, and so weakens its force; but it makes the temptation an occasion of merit, and of growth in holiness. It enrages the devil beyond measure;

because it is, in fact, turning his own weapons against himself. When, therefore, he finds that his suggestions, instead of leading us into sin, as he intended, are really occasions to us for additional grace and merit; depend upon it, he will soon desist from tempting us: from pursuing a course so disastrous to himself, and so beneficial to us.

4. A fourth rule is, that we should exercise ourselves in acts which are directly contrary to the temptation. For example, if we are tempted to sensuality, we should mortify our flesh by some sensible castigation: if we are tempted to hatred and ill-will, we should show some sign of friendship to, or pray fervently for, the person towards whom we are affected.

5. The fifth rule is, not to think that temptations are punishments, but rather, merciful visitations, permitted by God for our greater good; to convince us of our own weakness, and to compel us to have recourse to Him and His Divine grace, as our only resource. Hence, we should welcome temptations as favours, and receive them with thanksgiving, according to St. James: "my brethren, count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations." (James I; 2.) For "virtue," as another apostle says, "is made perfect in infirmity." (II Cor. XII; 9.) The more we are tempted against any virtue, the more strengthened do we become in the practice of that virtue, if, by the grace of God, we resist the temptation.

6. A sixth rule is to cultivate a tender and con-

fiding love for our blessed Lady; and to have a firm persuasion that no one will perish who is truly devout to her, and has recourse to her. Why should we not learn a lesson from irrational creatures? When the little fledgelings see the hawk hovering over them, and preparing to pounce upon them, they immediately take refuge under their mother's wing, who shelters and defends them from their cruel foe. That is just what we ought to do, when we are attacked by our spiritual foe; we should fly under our Mother's wing, who is able to secure and defend us from all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.

7. The seventh rule is to be always mindful of our last end, and of the great eternal truths which are summed up in those momentous words: Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven. "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." (Ecclus.VII; 40.) A man may easily tumble into a pit fall, if he walks with his eyes shut, or will not consider where he is going. But he will hardly walk into it with his eyes open. Even so, one who has the thought of death and judgment and hell before his mind, will hardly go and deliberately commit the sin which entails such fearful consequences. Therefore, we should accustom ourselves to use such little ejaculatory prayers in the time of temptation, as may call up the thought of these great truths, and so enable us to overcome the temptation.

Such, my brethren, are some of the rules laid down by spiritual writers to guide us in time of temptation. There are many others which might be mentioned,

but these will suffice for the present; and anyone who will make diligent use of them, or even of some of them, will soon find their great usefulness; and so, will come to regard temptations in their true light, as mercies sent from God, as occasions of exercising virtue, as means of humbling ourselves, and of obtaining God's grace, and lastly, as the seed of a future harvest of glory, which will be the reward of all who shall have lawfully fought and conquered.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(From the Gospel.)

"Render to God the things that are God's." (Matt. XXII; 21.)

In the gospel of this Sunday, my dear brethren, we find a remarkable instance of the Divine Wisdom of Him who spake as never man spake. The scribes and pharisees, who boasted of their superior learning and piety, were ever seeking to ensnare our Lord in His speech, by all sorts of captious questions; and they were constantly watching for an opportunity of bringing Him into discredit. In this they were actuated by the most malignant feelings of spite, and jealousy and revengeful hatred. For our blessed Lord was never so severe, in His reproof of sinners, as in the case of the scribes and pharisees. Other sinners, such as the Magdalene, Peter, the adulterous woman, were pardoned without a word of reproach,

because of their humble contrition. But for the scribes and pharisees, our Lord seemed to reserve all His indignation and reproof; because of their pride, their hypocrisy, and their malignity. On this occasion they adopted their usual method, and sought, by a cunning stratagem, to commit our blessed Lord to something which would bring down upon Him, either the vengeance of the civil authorities, or the dislike of the people, according to the answer which He would make.

Who can help admiring the wisdom, and, at the same time, the meekness of our Lord's reply: "Show Me," He said, "the coin of the tribute." And he said: "Whose image and superscription is this?" They said to Him: "Caesar's." Then He said: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." Our Lord came into this world to set an example of obedience. Entering into the world, He said: "in the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will, O God." (Ps. XXXIX; 8, 9.) And when He left the world, He was made "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. II; 8.) His whole life was a life of obedience. He was born in Bethlehem, in the midst of privation, through obedience to the edict of Caesar Augustus: He fled into Egypt, in obedience to the voice of an angel: for the rest of His hidden life of thirty years, nothing is recorded of Him, but that He was obedient to Mary and Joseph. During His passion, He meekly submitted, without a murmur, to all the reproaches

and ignominies and torments that were heaped upon Him; suffering Himself to be led about from one tribunal to another; from Caiphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back again to Pilate, from Pilate to Calvary; meekly answering the questions that were put to Him, and obeying His persecutors, even unto a cruel death.

Since therefore, He came on earth to teach and practice obedience, He could not counsel disobedience to lawfully-constituted authority, by denying the lawfulness of paying tribute to Caesar. And yet, He disarmed the malice of His inquisitors, and avoided the snares which they had laid for Him, by pointing out that there is a greater, and a higher duty of obedience, than that which we pay to earthly rulers: namely, the obedience we owe to God as our Creator, our first beginning, and our last end. These two duties ought not to conflict with one another; and will not, if we observe them rightly. The duty of obedience to civil authority, as regards the subject matter in which it is exercised, is restricted to the things of this world; to those things in short, upon which Caesar has stamped his image and superscription. For this is the end of civil government and authority, the good order and regulation of society in all that concerns its material interests and welfare; whilst God has given to His Church supreme control and direction over all that concerns the spiritual interests of the human family.

But though the end of civil government is merely natural, yet the motive from which we obey it, ought

to be supernatural. For obedience is a Christian virtue, elicited by God's grace, and performed with the intention of pleasing Him. Hence, we are told to obey "our rulers as sent by God, and to obey them, not out of fear," (Rom. XIII; 1, 7.) but from a desire to please God. This duty, however, necessarily has its limits, and does not extend beyond the range of those things upon which Caesar's image and superscription, the stamp of authority, has, by God's permission, been placed.

On the other hand, our obedience to God has no limits. For just as Caesar's jurisdiction extends to those things which bear his image and superscription; so also the authority of God extends to those things which bear His image and superscription. Now, what the Scripture says: "And God said: let us make man to our own image and likeness." (Gen. I; 26.) You bear about then, in your own persons, the image and superscription of God; and you are wholly His, body and soul, and wholly subject to His authority. Nothing that we have, nothing that we are, can claim any exemption from this authority of God over us. Such, and no other, are the limits, if limits they can be called, of our duty of obedience to God: limits which are measured, not by God's right to our obedience, for that is illimitable; but simply by the capabilities of our finite being.

This is a self-evident truth; for, as it is clear that "He made us, and not we ourselves," (Ps. XCIX; 3) so is it equally clear that He made us for Himself, and not for anything else. "God hath made all

things for Himself." (Prov. XVI; 4.) But God's title to our obedience does not rest here, although it is in itself all-sufficient.

God has not only made us, He has bought us. He is not only our Creator, He is also our Redeemer. When you, my brethren, have made anything by the labour of your hands, you value it as your own. But if, having lost it, you are compelled to buy it back at a price, how much more do you value it then? And the greater the price, the greater is the value you set upon it. Well, we were all lost to God through the first transgression, and through our own transgressions. God, Who hates none of those things which He has made, bought us back again (Wisd. XI; 25.) at a price, from the bondage of sin in which we were held. And, at what a price! God Himself must come down from heaven, and take the form of a slave, hiding His Divinity under the servile form of our humanity, even as He now hides both Divinity and Humanity under the sacramental veils. He became, as it were, the most abject of men, and the outcast of the people; and in that guise He suffered and died for us. "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son" to the world, (Joh. III; 16) that we might live through Him. Truly, the apostle might well say that "we are bought with a great price:" at no less a price than the labours and sufferings, the tears and sweat and blood of the Word Incarnate. Surely, this is enough to compel us to devote our whole being to the service of One who has bought us so dearly, and, in buying us so

dearly, has shown how highly He valued us. But this is not all; there is yet another title, why we belong wholly to God, and why we should give ourselves to Him.

He has not only made us and bought us, but He also possesses us. He is not only our Creator and Redeemer, but also our Sanctifier. By this threefold title we belong to the Three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. As the work of creation is attributed to God the Father, and the work of redemption was accomplished by God the Son, so the work of sanctification in the soul of man is perfected by God the Holy Ghost. Hence, the apostle reminds the faithful that their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, Who is given to them, Who abides in them. (I Cor. VI; 19.) And he takes occasion from this to warn them not to defile their bodies, on this account. For he says: whosoever "violates the temple of God, him shall God destroy." (I Cor. III; 17.) This is a great mystery, my brethren, that God should dwell in us, and that we should be incorporated with Him. For by the communication of the grace of the Holy Spirit, which we receive in the holy sacraments, and especially, in the holy sacrament of His Body and Blood, we are made one body in Christ. For "we are," indeed, "members of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones." (Eph. V; 30.)

Such, my dear brethren, are the titles by which God claims us wholly as His Own. Let us consider them well: and ask ourselves, whose image and

superscription is this? And when we find the Finger of God impressed upon us, in all those manifold ways which I have described, surely we must be moved to render to God the things that belong to Him; namely, our whole being, our mind with all its faculties, our heart with all its affections, our body, and everything that belongs to us. In this consists our whole duty here on earth; our whole happiness, both here and hereafter. It has been left to our choice whether we will serve God or not; but He has ordained that every disobedience should bring with it its own punishment, in this world and in the next. In this world, by the frustration of all those schemes of happiness which we so vainly pursue; in the next world, by the condemnation of soul and body to endless torments.

We were made for God alone; and if we seek our happiness in the things of this world, we shall reap nothing but sorrow and vexation of spirit. Remember that you cannot serve two masters. You must serve either God or the world. If you serve the world, it will prove a hard taskmaster during life, and will forsake you at the hour of death. If you serve God, you will find His yoke sweet, and His burden light. (Matt. XI; 30.) And He Himself will be your reward exceeding great, when this life is over. (Gen. XV; 1.) And it will be over soon for many of us; sooner or later for all of us. Let us take now the resolution we should wish to have taken at the hour of our death—to love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with all our

strength, and with all our mind. (Luke X; 27.) If we do this, we shall live; live with the supernatural life of grace here; and live hereafter with the eternal life, which consists in the sight and possession of the living God.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Lesson.)

"*That you may approve the better things; that you may be sincere and without offence, unto the day of Christ.*" (Phil. I; 10.)

The gospel of this Sunday, my dear brethren, teaches us the duty of rendering proper submission to the powers that be, to the Civil authority under which we live. As this is one of the duties of a Christian, prescribed by one of the commandments of God, which cannot be transgressed without grievous sin, it is right that you should be instructed on this subject, hence, availing myself of that liberty of speech which belongs to a preacher of the Gospel, I will say a few words about it, although I know that it is a delicate subject. In fact, strange to say, it was so also in the time of our blessed Lord: and it was purposely in order to compromise Him, that this insidious question was put to Him; "is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" For what was the state of the case? The Jews, the chosen people of God, had been subjugated by the Romans, a pagan

nation. The government, which God Himself had given to them, had been overthrown; and they had become a tributary people under the yoke of the foreigner, and subjected to all the tyrannical oppression and vexation which are the lot of a subject people.

The natural consequence was, that on the one hand, the Roman governors were always suspicious of the loyalty of their subjects, and ready, on the slightest pretext, to punish those who showed symptoms of a rebellious spirit; whilst on the other hand, the Jews regarded their rulers as their enemies, and nourished, in their hearts feelings of animosity and resentment, even if they dared not manifest them outwardly. Such was the state of things when this insidious question was put to our blessed Lord by His enemies. Their object was plain enough. If He had said that it was not lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, He would have brought on Himself the vengeance of the civil power; whilst, if He said that it was lawful, then He would make Himself unpopular with His countrymen. But our Lord knew how to escape the snare that was set for Him; nor was He to be hindered from preaching the truth, by the fear of any consequences. With a wisdom truly divine, He gave them that memorable answer: "Render, therefore, to Caesar," (that is, to the civil government under which you live, ("the things which are Caesar's; and to God, the things which are God's."

Now, my brethren, never, perhaps, was there a case of more galling oppression than that which the Jews had to suffer under the Roman yoke. If, then,

our Lord taught that they were to render obedience and submission under such circumstances, it follows that the same rules apply to all other cases of similar oppression. Let us, then, consider the nature of this duty, especially in these days, when the principle of authority, and the submission which is due to it, are openly set at naught; when factious and seditious men are doing their utmost to corrupt the minds of the people, to lead them into rebellion, and to disturb all those civil and social institutions which have been wisely ordained by Divine Providence, for the welfare, spiritual and temporal, of the human family.

In the first place, let us consider that submission to the civil authority of the government under which we live is a religious duty. For that authority is from God. "By Me kings reign and lawgivers decree just things. By Me princes rule, and the mighty decree justice," says the eternal Wisdom. (Prov. VIII; 15, 16.) It is a law of our nature that men should live in society; and society would be impossible, if there were not a supreme authority somewhere. There may be different forms of government in different countries, to suit their different habits and circumstances. But, whatever may be the form of government, there must be a supreme power somewhere, to which absolute submission is due, in all lawful things, on the part of those who are subject to it. This sovereign power comes directly from God; and to resist it, is to resist God Himself. Moreover, the person or persons, who exercise this

sovereign power, are indirectly appointed by God Himself, for whether they inherit it by birth, or are elected to it by the voice of the people, it is always God Himself, Who, by His Providence, disposes all these events. Hence, St. Peter says: "Fear God, honour the king:" (I Pet. II; 17) as much as to say, that the fear of God should lead us to honour the king, who is God's representative. If this was the case, when kings were cruel monsters, who persecuted the Church, as in St. Peter's time, surely, it must also be the case under every conceivable circumstance.

The nature of this duty is so clearly explained by St. Paul that it is not necessary for me to add anything to his words. They are to be found in his epistle to the Romans; that is, to the faithful in Rome, in the City of the Caesars, living under the rule of Nero, the most inhuman monster who ever disgraced the imperial purple. He says: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers. For there is no power but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation." (Rom. XIII; 1, 2.) Hence, when once a civil government has been established and is in peaceful possession of the sovereign power, it becomes criminal to resist it; and those who do resist it purchase damnation for themselves, and for the unhappy victims of their seditious intrigues.

Again, this submission should be not only external

and constrained, but should be rendered from the heart, and from a motive of religious duty. "Detract not the King," says the wise man, "No, not in thy thought." (Ecclus. X; 20.) And the apostle says: "Be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." (Rom. XIII; 5.) That is to say, our submission should not be prompted by a servile fear of punishment, but should be rendered cheerfully from a supernatural motive, recognizing in the civil power, the ordinance of God; and in those who exercise it, the ministers of that power. "Be ye subject, therefore, to every human creature for God's sake, whether it be to the King, as excelling, or to governors as sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of the good. For so is the Will of God." (I Pet. II; 13, 15.)

It is true that kings and rulers are under a grave responsibility as to the way in which they exercise their authority; and that a most strict account will be exacted of them for every act of injustice or oppression of which they may have been guilty towards their subjects. "A most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule." (Wisd. VI; 6) says the wise man. But it must ever be borne in mind that their injustice and oppression do not justify the rebellion of their subjects, nor any measures other than those which are contained within constitutional limits; otherwise there would never be wanting those who, on the slightest pretext, would fan the flame of sedition, and so render all government and social

order impossible. In fact, our own reason teaches us that in this, as in the other affairs of life, smaller evils must be endured, in order to escape the greater evils which would ensue, were we to seek indiscreetly to remedy those smaller ones.

In treating of the sin of rebellion against the civil authority, it must not be forgotten that the evil does not rest there. It will invariably be found that those who are most active in exciting rebellion and opposition to authority, are also most disloyal to the Church. For indeed, the authority of both Church and state rests on the same basis—the ordinance of God. Hence, when one has come to resist the authority of the state, it is but a step, and a necessary one, to attack the authority of the Church. It is this spirit of revolt against legitimate authority which is the chief cause of the miseries of the age. No wonder that the Popes, upon whose heads this spirit of revolt has poured forth the vials of its wrath, have in repeated encylical letters addressed to all the faithful, lifted up their apostolic voices against this evil. They have never ceased to deplore the calamities of the age, and to condemn, in the most stringent terms, the spirit of insubordination and resistance to authority which is fast spreading all over the world.

In conclusion, let me entreat you not to be misled by the noisy declamation of disloyal men who may call themselves Catholics, but have really cut themselves off from the Communion of the Church, by their secret and seditious conspiracies. Submit

yourselves, in all things, to the guidance of the pastors of the Church, who have to give an account of your souls. As long as you adhere to them you are safe. For the Spirit of God dwells in His Church, and will not suffer it to be led into any error. But, when once you abandon the guidance of the Church to follow that of men actuated by worldly and interested motives, you will certainly be led into the most calamitous and disastrous errors. Be loyal, then, to your God and to your Church. Thus, and only thus, will you be loyal to your country, and best promote its welfare, which after all, entirely depends on the observance of God's Commandments and the participation of His grace. That so, you may indeed, "approve the better things; that you may in all things be sincere and without offence in the day of Christ."

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Gospel.)

"*And the maid arose.*" (Matt. IX; 25.)

The miracles which our blessed Lord wrought had a twofold object (1): to relieve the corporal infirmities and miseries of those in whose behalf He worked the miracles; and (2) to manifest His power of healing those spiritual maladies of which these corporal diseases are types and figures. This latter was, indeed, our Lord's principal object; for He

came to heal the soul rather than the body. Hence, inasmuch as the diseases of the body find their counterpart in the maladies which affect the soul, the records of these miracles furnish us with a lively conception of the efficacy of Divine grace, in its workings on the soul. Thus, there are the spiritually blind, deaf, dumb, lame, there are spiritual lepers, and there are those who, like the woman of this day's gospel, suffer from spiritual exhaustion, through the constant loss, by draining, of that grace which furnishes supernatural life to the soul. For all these spiritual maladies, our blessed Lord, Who is the Divine Physician of souls, is ready to apply the suitable remedies, and to restore the sick to spiritual life and vigor. He heals our blindness by opening the eyes of our souls to the light of faith and wisdom, and so enables us to direct our steps in the way of salvation. He heals our deafness by opening our ears to the voice of His inspirations and admonitions. He heals our dumbness, by opening our lips in the confession of our sins, and in giving praise to His holy Name. He heals our lameness by enabling us to walk in the way of His holy commandments, and to run as a giant on the course of perfection. He heals our leprosy, by cleansing us from all iniquity in the bath of His most precious Blood. He heals our infirmity by the strengthening and invigorating grace which He unceasingly bestows upon us.

But of all the miracles which our Lord wrought, obviously, the most striking are those in which He raised the dead to life. 'Whilst there is life,' it is said,

'there is hope.' What patient is there who, wasted by some dire disease, does not cling to what little of life remains to him, and hope against hope for his ultimate recovery? But when the vital spark has fled, and the body becomes cold and inanimate, then all is over, and hope departs with the last breath. To bring back, therefore, the departed spirit into that lump of clay—to breathe once more into it the breath of life, and to make that cold, senseless thing once more a living being; this is a great and astounding miracle—this is, indeed, the work of the right Hand of the most High.

Equally great and astounding, therefore, in proportion, must be the raising to spiritual life of the soul that is dead in sin; by which I mean not merely conversion from the state of sin to the state of grace, for such conversion is signified by those lesser miracles of healing the blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb, the leprous, and so on. For what is spiritual blindness but the state of one who is deprived of the light of God's grace; and lameness, but inability to walk in the way of God's commandments; and deafness, but the rejection of God's calls and inspirations; and dumbness, but the neglect of prayer and confession; and leprosy, but the contagion of sinful habits and vicious indulgence? Now, all this means mortal sin; and to heal these maladies means to restore the dead to life. Hence, the restoration of the dead to life, in the natural order, must mean a conversion of a much higher kind in the supernatural order.

And so indeed it does; for it signifies the conversion of the inveterate and obdurate sinner; of one who is not only dead in sin, but who has lost every vestige of life; who is utterly deprived of sense and motion, and consciousness of his state; who is cold and inanimate, and incapable of being quickened by any influence. There is, indeed, a great difference between sinners of the former and of the latter class. In the Confessions of St. Augustine, we read how, in the midst of his career of heresy and vice, he still yearned for the grace of God. There was that spiritual vitality in him still, which struggled against the bondage of vicious habits; and which only awaited the quickening touch of Divine grace to break through the bands of death, and arise to a new life. And so, no doubt it is, in the experience of many a one. When we were in the state of sin, we felt the misery of our condition. Like the prodigal, we acknowledged, in the bitterness of our heart, that the sinful indulgences for the sake of which we had forsaken our Father's house were, after all, but the husks that swine do eat; and like him, we felt the inspirations of Divine grace, bidding us arise and go to be reconciled to our heavenly Father. Of conversions such as these, we have no doubt had repeated experience in our own case or in the case of others. Over these conversions the angels in heaven, and the Church on earth, daily and hourly rejoice.

But far otherwise is it with inveterate sinners; and rare, indeed, are the instances of their conversion. In fact, we find that though our Lord was

continually healing the sick and curing all manner of diseases; yet, there are but three instances recorded in which He raised the dead to life; of which this day's gospel records one. As though He would thereby instruct us on the one hand, not to despair of any one's salvation; and on the other, not to presume too much on His indulgence. How fares it then, with the inveterate sinner? He has, long ago, given himself up entirely to the gratification of his sinful appetites. He has, long ago, abandoned all his spiritual duties, his prayers, attendance at holy Mass and the sacraments. At first, indeed, he felt the sting of remorse and the reproaches of a guilty conscience. But that sting and that reproach have long been stifled.

The blind and deaf, the dumb and the leprous know their own misery; they can at least, stand by the wayside when the Son of Man is passing by, and cry out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us;" or, with the woman of this day's gospel, they may even dare to approach and touch the hem of His garment; but the inveterate sinner is, to all intents and purposes, dead. He cannot speak or move. He does not even know his own miserable condition. He cannot pray, he cannot lift his hands to heaven. How shall such a one be converted? God, in His infinite mercy can, and does sometimes, accord so great a grace, but how seldom! Let us, my dear brethren, fear and tremble lest we should bring ourselves to such an awful state by our unfaithfulness to grace. We have, indeed, but too much reason

to fear. For, what with our continual relapses into sin, and our indifference to our spiritual interests, what is it that prevents us from falling into this fearful, this hopeless state, but the undeserved grace of Almighty God? So that if God were to withdraw His grace, the very next time you fall into mortal sin, your soul would be numbered with the dead; and it would be well for you if you were to descend that moment into hell, that you might have a less weight of damnation on your head.

In the face of such a risk as this, how can you go on calmly and indifferently, committing sin after sin, expecting that you will be able to return to confession and to be reconciled with your offended God? Is God to be mocked with impunity? Are His Mercy and His long-suffering Patience to be outraged and turned against Himself, by being made a pretext for persevering in sin? I speak not of sins of frailty, of suprise, or of occasional yielding to some strong temptation, but of habitual sin; of sin deliberately committed and persevered in, presuming on God's Mercy. Who has guaranteed you time and grace for repentance? The graces of God are limited in number; and God alone knows when the last grace has been conceded. And when that last grace has been given and rejected, what will you do then? This is why, my dear brethren, we are bidden to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, (Phil. II; 12; Eph. V; 15) and to walk circumspectly; why they who think themselves to stand should take heed lest they fall. (I Cor.; X 12.) Let

us, then, look to ourselves, and beware lest we fall into this unhappy class of sinners; and let us labour more and more earnestly to make our calling and our election sure. (II Pet. I; 10.)

But let us not look to ourselves alone. Let us also pray for those who have long since ceased to pray for themselves. Of the three whom our Lord raised to life, two received that grace in consequence of the earnest prayers and entreaties of others. As though our Lord would teach us that He is only waiting for our prayers to induce Him to extend this omnipotent aid to those unhappy souls that are dead in sin. And if, by your prayers, you should succeed in obtaining the conversion of only one such sinner: (and who is there who may not hope to obtain so much as that?) what a reward will be yours! It will give glory to God, joy to the angels, salvation to that poor soul, and will bring down blessings a hundred fold upon yourselves. Above all, that crowning blessing which is promised to those who shall be instrumental in the conversion of others—that they shall shine as Stars for all eternity. (Dan. XII; 3.)

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Lesson.)

"Be followers of me, brethren, and observe them who walk so as you have our model." (Phil. III; 17.)

It might seem great boldness, my dear brethren, on the part of the apostle St. Paul, to exhort the faithful to follow his example, and to walk in his footsteps, did we not know that, in giving this exhortation, he was inspired by the Holy Ghost, and not by the spirit of vain-glory. For, from many other passages in his epistles, we know what a mean opinion this great apostle had of himself; that he deemed himself unworthy to be called an apostle; (I Cor. XV; 9) in fact, none of the inspired writers is so emphatic in proclaiming his own nothingness, as St. Paul. He glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may be made manifest in him; (II Cor. XII; 9) he admits that it is entirely owing to the grace of God that he is what he is. (I Cor. XV; 10.) Hence, this exhortation to the faithful to be followers of himself, is after all, an exhortation to them to profit, as he has done by the graces which are given to them.

In fact, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, he says: "be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." (I Cor. IV; 16.) Now, what St. Paul said, every pastor of souls ought to be able to say. For they, as St. Peter observes, are "made a pattern of the flock, from the heart." (I Pet. V; 3.) It is, therefore, their duty to set an example to their flock, and to

exhort them to follow it. Thus St. Paul prescribes in his instructions to his two disciples, Timothy and Titus. To the one, he says: "be thou an example of the faithful:" (I Tim. IV; 12) and to the other: "in all things, show thyself an example of good works." (Tit. II; 7.) But of course, itis not my purpose to speak of the duties of pastors towards their flocks; but rather I speak to you, the members of the flock; and I say that you also, in your measure, are bound to carry out this apostolate, as I might term it, of good example. For we are all, in a certain sense, apostles of Jesus Christ, bound to promote His interests, and to extend His Kingdom over the hearts of men. The duty of giving good example is incumbent on all; because it is an essential part of the great precept of charity, by which we are commanded to love all, without exception, for Christ's sake.

Now, this fraternal charity implies that we are bound to wish for others. and to strive to procure for others,all the happiness which we desire for ourselves. Unquestionably. the greatest good we can strive to procure for them is that spiritual edification which is the fruit of good example. I propose, therefore, to say a few words on this subject, which is evidently of the utmost importance; for it follows from what has been said that the omission of this duty may well become a grievous breach of the precept of charity.

He who gives bad example commits a double sin. Besides the sin he commits himself, he is also guilty of violating the law of charity, by doing what in him

lies to entice his brethren into the like sin. Again, he who neglects to give good example, though he may not, by his omission, violate any other precept, is still guilty of violating this, which is one of the two great Commandments of the law. To all men it has been said, in a certain measure: "You are the light of the world: so let your light shine before men that they may see your good works; and may glorify your Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. V; 14, 16.)

Consider in the next place, what may be done by good example. Our Divine Lord, the eternal Wisdom, Who spake as never other man spake, Whose words had a grace of persuasiveness which flowed from the Divine Spirit that uttered them, and were therefore calculated to touch and move the hearts of men with infallible certainty; yet even He relied, more than anything, on His own example. "I have given you an example," He says, "that, as I have done to you, so you do also." (Joh. XIII; 15.) And again: "Learn of Me; because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. XI; 29.) A great Father of the Church says that good example is more powerful towards the conversion of others, than the working of miracles. In fact, he attributes the wonderful success of the apostles in converting the nations, rather to the example of their lives, than to the miracles they wrought. "They converted the world, not so much by the miracles they wrought, but because there was manifest in them a sincere contempt for worldly honours and riches."

Good example acts alike upon the mind and upon

the heart. It enlightens the mind, it touches and moves the heart, far better than any exhortation can do. For as the heathen poet observes, we naturally trust more to our eyes than to our ears; and what we see before our eyes is much more efficacious in moving our wills, than what falls only upon the ear. Exhortation is but the breath; whilst good example is the actual substance of virtue, embodied in its living reality. St. Paul says to the Corinthians: "My preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the Spirit and power." (I Cor. II; 4.)

The great St. Augustine was, during the early years of his life, the slave of his passions. But during his sinful career, the sting of remorse never ceased to make itself felt. For years he underwent a hopeless struggle, striving to break loose from the chains with which he was bound. But in vain. He sighed and groaned and wept; and was about to relinquish the struggle in despair, when he had a vision which comforted him, and which finally led to his conversion. What, then, was it which moved his heart so efficaciously? It was good example. He thought he saw the Divine Sanctity standing before him with an air of majesty and sweetness, pointing to a troop of virgins which accompanied the vision; and saying: 'Canst thou not do what these have done?' He saw there youths and maidens, who were once denizens of this world, clothed with the same flesh, subject to the same passions, assailed with the same temptations; and yet, they had overcome them all.

They had preserved themselves, by the grace of God, from the contaminations of the world; and now, they were in the enjoyment of their reward. "Canst thou not do what these have done?" This vision inflamed him with so ardent a desire of virtue, that he at once resolved to imitate their example; and his conversion dated from that hour. Hence, we see that example is a kind of preaching which produces incalculable effects.

It has this advantage, that it is a perpetual exhortation. We cannot always be instructing by word of mouth, nor are all qualified to instruct in that way. But all can preach by example; and they can preach at all times by their demeanour, by every action of their lives.

Again, the effects of good example are certain, though perhaps unseen; and they are lasting. The example of virtue may excite the ridicule or contempt of some; but it will certainly move others to admiration, and perhaps to imitation; sooner or later the good seed is sure to bear fruit. When the Baptist came out of the desert, to preach penance to the people, what was it that moved the multitude to flock around him, and to seek baptism at his hands? It was not eloquence, for he did not study eloquence; it was not miracles, for he never wrought any; it was not that he addressed them with compliments, for he unsparingly laid bare their vices; but it was the example of his austere life. His clothing was a camel's hide, and his food, locusts and wild honey. When St. Francis Borgia was preaching, even those

who did not understand the language in which he spoke, were, nevertheless, moved to tears of compunction by the very appearance of the Saint. In like manner, do we not ourselves feel the power and efficacy of good example, in inspirlng us with holy aspirations, as often as we come in contact with one who breathes in every word and action the spirit of Christian piety?

Do we not feel ourselves moved to a greater esteem of virtue, and feel a more earnest desire of practicing it; and of amending those faults which show more glaring by contrast with one who has overcome them in himself? Let the fruit of this discourse, then, be an earnest resolution, henceforth to be more diligent in works of piety; not only for their own sake, for the merit which they bring us, and for the glory which is their reward; but also, because of the edification they give to others; that we may be instrumental in bringing others to Christ, and to the practice of their religious duties; that we may merit to be called by the apostle, in the words of this Sunday's lesson, his fellow-labourers in the Gospel; and so, to establish a claim to that blessed reward which is promised to all such—that their names shall be written in the Book of Life.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Gospel)

"*Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.*" (Matt. XXIV; 34.)

It must have occurred to your minds before this, my dear brethren, that the Church, within the compass of the year, embraces all the great facts which are connected with the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of our Saviour, and all the mysteries which spring from those great facts. Indeed, one might say that the Church, in the course of the year, enacts over again the life of our blessed Lord, and epitomizes the dealings of God with His creatures. You know also, that the Church begins her year with Advent Sunday; that is, next Sunday: so that on this day we are keeping the close of the ecclesiastical year. Hence, the Church most appropriately proposes to us this day's gospel for our devout meditation. Let us then consider its meaning.

As you heard it read, you must have been struck with the awful and solemn warning which our Lord addresses to us. I say, to *us;* because, although the words seem to refer to events which do not concern us, yet whatsoever was written, was written for our learning. (Rom. XV; 4.) Now, in this discourse, our Lord had in view three distinct periods: (1) the destruction of Jerusalem, about the year 70; that is, as He Himself foretold, before the generation of those whom He addressed had passed away: (2)

the general judgment, when the Son of Man will come in great power and majesty, surrounded by angels, to judge the world, and to separate forever, the bad from the good; to receive these into everlasting bliss, and to banish those into everlasting misery. (3.) But, my brethren, there is a third period which our Lord had distinctly in view, in speaking these words: I mean, that whenever, and wherever, and to whomsoever, this gospel should be preached, then, and there, and to those He wished His words to be applicable. For He Himself says: "Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass." (Joh. XIV; 6.) The words of our Lord, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, are applicable to all, at all times, and in all places. Now, it is on this latter application, that I wish to address a few words to you. The first application—to the destruction of Jerusalem rule is rather a matter of history. The second —to the general Judgment, though well worthy of our consideration, I put aside for the present, and will address myself to the meaning of these words as they apply to ourselves in our present circumstances.

1. "When, therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place; he that readeth, let him understand." The "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, had its literal fulfilment in the desecration and profanation of the temple of Jerusalem, prior to its total destruction by the Romans under Titus. But, since according to the teaching of St. Paul, everything

that happened to the people of Israel under the old covenant, happened to them in figure, and was a type of what should take place, under the new dispensation; we may well look around us, and see if we can trace any of those signs of which our Lord forewarns us. And do we not see them, my dear brethren, but too plainly and unmistakably?

Enter any of our old Cathedrals, or the parish churches which remain as witnesses of the ancient faith; and ask yourself, who built those imperishable structures, and for what purpose? The answer to the first question is recorded in history. They were built by our Catholic ancestors, in union and communion with the universal Church of Christ, under the headship of the Vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome. The answer to the second question is written in the stones themselves. They speak for themselves, and testify the purpose for which they were erected. Those glorious aisles, overarched and canopied with graceful sculpture, were never intended to be stocked with comfortable pews, like stalls in a cattle-market; but to lead the feet of the pious worshipper to the Holy of Holies—to the Sanctuary of the Lord of hosts—to the place where His glory dwelleth—to the altar, (Ps. XXV; 8) on which He was daily immolated, as a holy sacrifice and a pure oblation, to propitiate His Father's wrath.

But alas! what do we see there now? We see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. Bitterly might we complain with the

Magdalene: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." (Joh. XX; 13.) Yes, my brethren, for well nigh four centuries the real presence of our Lord has been banished from those ancient sanctuaries; and the Sanctuaries themselves have been rifled and despoiled, desecrated and profaned. "The stones of the Sanctuary are scattered in the top of every street." (Lam. IV; 1.) Those miscreants who robbed the people of England of their faith, knew what they were about. They knew it was not necessary to destroy the churches, which indeed, they required as a pretext for their retention of the Church endowments; but it was necessary that they should destroy the altars and abolish the perpetual sacrifice. This they ruthlessly accomplished, not leaving even one within the four corners of the unhappy land. Thus they stand to this present day, living monuments of their former glories and their present degradation.

I have asked you to enter one of these ancient churches with me, and I have led you up to the spot where once stood the altar; and if you ask me how do I know that an altar once stood there on which sacrifice was offered up, I will point to a convincing proof of it which still remains. Close by at the side, you will see the Sedilia—three canopied niches or recesses in which sat the sacrificing priest with his ministers, during certain parts of the sacred function. These, I say, for the most part, remain to this day, utterly meaningless and purposeless in the present state of desolation; but testifying to the

ancient faith and liturgy. In the same way I might point to the little recesses in the wall, destined for the ministration of the elements, in the masses which were celebrated at all the various altars, scattered throughout the sacred edifice. I would point to the carved and painted images of the Saints of old, to the stained windows, richly decked with the memorials of the piety of our ancestors, of their devotion to the Mother of God, and to His saints. And I would ask in conclusion, is it not clear, for what purpose these glorious piles were erected; namely, for the worship and liturgy of that Church which alone knew how to erect them, and how to adapt them to her service.

We see, then, my brethren, this abomination of desolation standing before our eyes. What are we to do? Our Lord says: "They that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains." You, my brethren, as members of the Catholic Church, have followed this advice; you have fled from the abomination which pollutes the holy place, and have taken refuge in that City which is seated on the mountains; in which alone, Jesus Christ says, salvation is to be found. But, perhaps, there may be here one or two who are not yet members of the one true fold; if so, I would earnestly exhort them to hesitate no longer, but to hasten to that city seated on a hill, to which all nations have gathered, and shall gather—to the Church of your fathers—to the Church which alone enjoys the inheritance of the covenanted promises of our Lord, when He prayed for all those who,

through the words of His apostles, should believe in Him. We have considered the abomination of desolation, as it is realized in the material temples of the ancient faith now desecrated. Let us next consider it as it exists in the moral world, in the society in which we live.

2. The second evil, therefore, against which our Lord warns us, is the great tribulation. "For there shall be then great tribulation." What these tribulation are, you hardly require to be told. They are both temporal and spiritual. Is not the whole world plunged in the deepest distress and misery? Wars and rumors of wars have devastated the face of the earth, and stricken dismay into the hearts of millions. Ancient dynasties have been overthrown, and thrones overturned. Subterranean fires have found a vent, and terrified the world with their lurid flames. Whole nations have well nigh perished with hunger. Pestilence has made havoc in populous cities; and year by year, the dread angel of destruction brandishes his sword over the sinful nations. But, worse than all this, the most terrible spiritual calamities have visited the world. Men have rebelled, not only against their rulers, but against their God and His anointed, the Vicar of Christ. The fires of unruly passions have burst forth and enveloped the world in devouring flames. Society has been shaken to its centre by iniquitous laws. The sanctity of marriage has been violated. Sacrilegious hands have been laid on the patrimony of the Church, and the State has encroached on its inalien-

able birthright. The people are perishing with spiritual hunger, because the temples have been laid waste, and the priests of God expelled; the little ones have cried for the bread of instruction, and there was none to break it to them. (Lam. IV; 4.) Add to all this, the fearful contagion of an unlicensed press, vomiting forth day by day its foul corruption, poisoning the minds of the unsuspecting, and pandering to the passions of the licentious. This, my brethren, is the spectacle which the world at this time presents to our gaze.

But against this evil we have the remedy of *Hope*. We know that God's holy Providence has a care of us; and we know that all things, even such evils as these, work together for the good of the elect. (Rom. VIII; 28.) But in order that our hope may be well founded, we must take care that we are in the number of the elect—in the number of those for whose sake the days of tribulation shall be shortened, and to whose advantage these very tribulations shall be directed. Who, then, are the elect? They are, the apostle tells us, those who have made their lives conformable to the image of the life of Jesus Christ. (29.) They are those who persevere in that course to the end. (Matt. XXIV; 13.) For such only shall be saved; those who persevere although the whole world is rushing headlong to its ruin. Moreover, if we really possess this hope, we shall pray with fervour and confidence and perseverance, that the days of tribulation may be shortened; and that God would arise in His Might and scatter His enemies.

3. The third evil which menaces the world is apostasy. "Then, if any man shall say to you, lo! here is Christ, or there, do not believe him; for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold, I have told it to you beforehand." Since the faith was well nigh exterminated from this country by a tyrannical government, the principle of authority was overthrown; and as a natural consequence, every one does that which seems good in his own eyes. There are as many sects as heads in the land In this general aspostasy from the faith, no wonder that men who are longing for something to believe in, are ready to follow every imposter who chooses to set up a religion, no matter how abused or impious his doctrines may be. And what, my brethren, is our duty in the midst of this apostacy? What remedy has our Lord prescribed against it? "If, therefore, they shall say to you, behold He is in the desert, go ye not out; behold, He is in the closets, believe it not." Let us, then, hold fast the ancient faith, once delivered to the Saints; and let us turn a deaf ear to the plausible speeches of false prophets—"lying teachers," as St. Peter calls them; "who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord Who bought them; bringing upon themselves swift destruction." (II Pet. II; 1.) There is but one voice to which we should listen. As the sheep of Christ's one fold, we should hear only the voice of the Chief Shepherd, of him to whom Christ said: "feed My sheep; feed My lambs." (Joh. XXI; 15, 17.)

Let us, then, strive to grow in lively faith, and attachment to the teaching of the Church, and in obedience to the voice of her pastors. The teaching of that Church, and her authority to teach, are clear and manifest, even as the lightning which cometh out of the east and appeareth even unto the west; for the Church illuminates both east and west with the light of truth. Wheresoever the mystical Body of Christ, which is His Church, shall be, there shall the eagles; that is, the pastors of the Church, also be gathered together. Let us, then, strengthen the bonds of union which unite us as members to that mystical Body. Again, wheresoever the Body of Christ is immolated on our altars, there let the faithful, as eagles, assemble, eager to refresh themselves with that divine Food, in the strength of which, like Elias, they may go up to the mountain of God. (III Kings XIX; 8.) Finally, wheresoever is the glorified Body of Jesus Christ, there in the resurrection of the just, shall the faithful members of His Church be gathered together; to share with Him for all eternity, the never-fading crown of glory which He has purchased for us by His Blood. (I Pet. V; 4.)

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(From the Lesson.)

"*Instruct thy son and labour about him, lest his lewd behaviour be an offence to thee.*" (Eccle. XXX; 13.)

The lesson of this Sunday, my dear brethren, suggests to us the important duty of the education of children. For the apostle deems it necessary in order that we may walk worthily of God, and be fruitful in every good work, that we should be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Indeed, our own reason teaches us that we cannot do the will of God unless we know what that will is. And since God does not make a revelation of His will to each individual, but leaves us to the ordinary means of instruction with which His Providence has furnished us, it follows that if we neglect those means of instruction, we shall grow up in ignorance of God's will; and instead of becoming partakers of the lot of the saints in light, we shall remain under the power of darkness, and be forever excluded from the Kingdom of His Son.

Hence,we may conclude how much the salvation of children depends upon their parents; and especially upon the care which the parents take to get their children instructed in the principles of the faith and in its practice. There is nothing to astonish us in this when we consider what a close connection there is between the natural and the supernatural order.

In the same way, then, that the temporal life and welfare of the child depend entirely upon the parents; for the child is perfectly helpless, and if not fed and clothed and tended by the parents, will certainly perish; so the supernatural life of the child depends upon the parents; so that if the parents do not take continual care that their children are properly instructed in their religious duties, and in the maxims of the Catholic faith, the souls of those children will probably be lost, and their blood will be required at their parents' hands. It is astonishing how careless and indifferent parents generally are as to this all-important duty. A parent who should imbue his hands in the blood of his children, or should treat them with cruelty, or allow them to perish with cold or hunger, would justly be regarded as an inhuman monster, and would be held up to universal execration. And yet if there be any truth in the Christian revelation, does it not follow that a parent would be guilty of a much greater crime, who should cause the spiritual death of his children, by neglecting to give them a Christian education; much more by sending them to schools where their faith and their morals would be exposed to imminent peril.

Surely, this indifference to the spiritual welfare of their children is far more prejudicial to their highest interests than would be the neglect of proper care for their temporal welfare. For certainly, as far as the child is concerned, the loss of corporal goods and of life itself, is of infinitely less import-

ance than the loss of God's grace and of the immortal soul. And yet, parents are to be found who seem to think that they are under no responsibility at all for the Christian education of their children. Such parents will be woefully undeceived in the hour of their death, when they shall stand before God to be judged.

They will then find that they have made a terrible mistake, and a mistake which is irreparable for all eternity. For God will demand of them, not only an account of their own sins, but also of those of their children. God will say to them: "I gave you children: I shed every drop of My Blood for their salvation; I provided you and them with every means of salvation; I sent priests to instruct you; I inspired My servants to establish schools in which your children might receive a Christian training; I gave you sacraments to enable you to keep yourselves and your children in My grace. Where are those children now?" What will those unhappy parents have to answer? My brethren, they will have no occasion to answer. There will be one standing by their side, Satan, the accuser of the brethren, who will answer for them. "I have those children," he will say: "these parents took no care of them; they neglected them; they cared not whether they went to Church or school; they allowed them to run the streets at their pleasure; I found them in the streets; I picked them up; I took them into bad company; I taught them all manner of wickedness, I made them give up going to mass and the Sacraments. And, whilst

I was doing all this, the parents looked on, and took no heed; they allowed their children to have their own way, and that way was my way. I have those children; they belong to me, body and soul; and they will be mine for all eternity. And now, O God, I demand the parents too. If the children are mine, the parents must be mine. I demand them."

Will those unhappy parents be able to dispute the truth or justice of the devil's claim? Certainly not. They brought their children into the world, and they must follow them out of it, even to the bottomless pit; if, through their fault and negligence, their children have been consigned to that dismal abode. Let all parents lay these words well to heart. Ask yourselves, where are your children, at this present moment when I am addressing you; on which way are they walking, towards heaven or hell? For, depend upon it, whichever way they are going, you will have to go the same way too. For on you it depends, whether they walk in the way of salvation, or in the broad road that leads to damnation.

Listen to the advice of the wise man: "Give thy son his way; and he shall make thee afraid; play with him, and he shall make thee sorrowful. Laugh not with him, lest thou have sorrow. And, at the last, thy teeth be set on edge—give him not liberty in his youth, and wink not at his devices. Bow down his neck while he is young; and beat his sides while he is yet a child, lest he grow stubborn, and regard thee not, and so, be a sorrow of heart to thee." (Ecclus. XXX; 9, 12.)

Train up a child in the way he should go; and, when he is old, he will not depart from it. Of all the young men and young women of this congregation, how many are to be found who are regular in assisting at Mass, and in frequenting the Sacraments? They are but a mere handful, comparatively speaking. How many, on the other hand, have given up faith and religion altogether: have married Protestant wives and husbands, and bring their own children up as heathens, without even the name of being Catholics? Why, their name is legion. (Mark V; 9.) And will not the parents have to answer for all this? Most assuredly they will. I do not deny that cases may occur, where parents have fully discharged their duties towards their children, and where the children have, nevertheless, gone astray, through causes over which the parents had no control. But such cases are exceptional. As a general rule, the responsibility rests solely on the parents. And yet, parents are to be found, who, whilst they are themselves regular in the discharge of their religious duties, nevertheless regard with apparent indifference and unconcern, the prevarication of their children.

They seem to think that they have divested themselves of all responsibility, and are sufficiently excused, when they allege that 'their children will not be said by them.' Yes, but why will children not be said by their parents? It is simply and solely on account of the way in which they have been brought up by their parents from their earliest infancy. It

is from the absence of that direct discipline and vigilant control, without which, evil inclinations are sure to develop themselves, and, sooner or later, assert the mastery over these weak and indulgent parents. It is not enough, then, for these parents to lament and deplore the evil courses of their children, as though it were something they could not help. Why, even if they fasted on bread and water all the days of their life, it would be all too little to atone for their hideous sin, in murdering their children's souls, by their bad example, their neglect, and their fond indulgence. Christian parents! let the Christian education of your children be your first care, morning and night. Let no hardship or fatigue hinder you from watching over them. If you bring children into the world, you, and you alone, are responsible for their immortal souls; and you will have to answer for their souls with your own.

On the other hand, consider what consolations follow from the exact discharge of this duty. For what duty of parents can be more consoling and pleasant than that of watching over the Christian education of their children, training them up, by word and example to walk worthily of the vocation to which they have been called, of being children of the light; to find, in their piety and devotion, that comfort and consolation for their old age, which parents who have really done their duty by their children may reasonably expect from them. And not only in this life; for, their declining years will

also be cheered by the thought that they will meet them once more in heaven, never to be separated, but to enjoy, for all eternity, that happiness which by the faithful discharge of their parental duties, they have merited upon earth.

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As the Feast of the Dedication of a Church is usually fixed on some Sunday after Pentecost, the Sermons for that Festival are inserted here, at the end of the Sermons '*de tempore.*'

DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

(From the Gospel.)

Jesus said to him: "this day is salvation come to this house." (Luke XIX; 9.)

The festival of the Dedication of the Church which we celebrate this day, ranks as one of the greatest festivals in the year. In the sacred Liturgy, it is regarded as the celebration of the solemn nuptials between Christ and His spouse, the Church. And as you, my brethren, are the offspring of those nuptials, it is fitting that you should celebrate this festival with all joyous solemnity. In order, then, to help you to enter into the proper sentiments with which this Feast should be observed, I propose to consider in what the sacred character of this temple consists, and what are the duties and obligations of those who frequent its ministrations.

This sacred character, then, is derived (1) from the fact that it is the dwelling-place of the most

High; (2) it is the place of sacrifice, where the Lamb of God is immolated for us: (3) it is the place whence the fruits of that atonement which Christ has purchased for us, are derived to our souls. In short, the sacred character of this temple is concentrated on three spots: the tabernacle, the altar, and the place of holy communion.

1. It is the dwelling-place of the Most High. He Who is not to be contained by heaven and earth; Whose immensity is not to be compassed by any limits of space, is contained under this roof, dwells within this tabernacle; fulfiling to the letter His Own Divine Promise: "I have sanctified this house, to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My Heart shall be there always." (III Kings IX; 3.) This abiding presence of our Divine Lord is the sequel of the Incarnation of God the Son. For, "having loved His Own, who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (Joh. XIII; 1.) Having hidden His Divinity under the servile form of our humanity, in order to converse with us; He would also hide even that human nature under the Eucharistic elements, in order to abide with usunto the end. This tabernacle, then, is the true mercy-seat, foreshadowed in the old testament; whereon our blessed Lord is forever pleading our cause, and representing to His eternal Father the atonement He has made for us. It was the sanctity of this Divine Presence which stirred the holy Psalmist with devout rapture, when he sang its praises in that beautiful canticle: "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" (Ps.

LXXXIII; 2.) But if he was so enraptured with the mere anticipation of that which he was not privileged to enjoy, what ought to be our sentiments of joy and gratitude, who enjoy the possession of the substance of those good things? Truly, "Many prophets and Kings have desired to see the things that we see, and have not seen them." (Luke X; 24.) Would that we could also add: "blessed are our eyes that see the things which we see." (23) For great graces involve great responsibilities.

For what does it imply? It implies that the affections of our heart, the faculites of mind and body, should be concentrated on this tabernacle, where our supreme Good and Happiness reposes: that our soul ought to "long and faint for the courts of the Lord; and our heart and our flesh rejoice in the living God." (Ps. LXXXIII; 3.) It is hence that we should seek strength and consolation in all our trials and troubles. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord." (5) Our hearts should find their home in this tabernacle. Thither we should turn with eagerness, in preference to all earthly consolations. "Better is one day in Thy Courts above thousands." (11)

2. Let us now turn from the tabernacle to the altar on which it rests. Our Lord, not satisfied with merely dwelling amongst us, would also renew, for our sakes, day by day, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, that clean oblation which He made of Himself upon the cross. (Mal. I; 11.) As the mystery of the Incarnation is explained by

the sacrifice of Calvary, so is the mystery of the abiding presence of our Lord in the tabernacle explained by the sacrifice of the Mass. His love required that these mysteries should be perpetuated till the end of time. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. XXXI; 3.) What would become of the world without the sacrifice of the Mass? Even as it is, the world seems utterly lost. Enter any of our large cities and crowded thoroughfares, and mark the countenances of those that throng them. The spirit of Mammon is stamped on all of them. Read the annals of crime; study the policy of governments. You will find that hatred of holiness and truth is the pervading spirit of society and the world. What is it then but the perpetual sacrifice of the Mass which keeps together the frame-work of the moral and physical world? When God promised Noah that He would no more destroy the earth with a flood, He said: "This is the sign of the covenant; I will set My bow in the clouds; and it shall be the sign of a covenant between Me and between the earth." (Gen. IX; 12, 13.)

The holy Mass is the fulfilment of this type. Every time that the Son of God becomes, as it were, incarnate in the hands of the priest, God remembers His covenant, that He will no more destroy the earth. Notwithstanding the august character of this holy Sacrifice, it would seem that close familiarity with holy things has rendered us indifferent to them. Who would suppose, from the attitude of many at Holy Mass, that they were assisting at

the immolation of the immaculate Lamb of God? Faith teaches us that the Mass is the same sacrifice as that of Calvary; the Victim being the same, and the High Priest the same. So that, if we assist at Mass irreverently, we really unite ourselves to the scoffing crowd that derided Jesus on the Cross. But though we may not be guilty of positive irreverence, can any of us say that he appreciates this great Sacrifice as he ought? It is the highest act of worship we can offer to God, and it satisfies all the obligations we owe to Him. For by this sacrifice, we render to God honour and glory worthy of Him, because we offer to Him His Own beloved Son: we render adequate thanks for all God's mercies and graces bestowed upon us; we make sufficient atonement for all our sins, for, in this sacrifice, the Blood of Jesus is mystically shed, every drop of which is able to atone for the guilt of the whole world; and lastly, by this sacrifice, we establish a claim to all those graces and helps which are necessary for our sanctification and salvation. For when He has placed Himself, a willing Victim, in our hands,"how hath He not, with Himself, given us all things?" (Rom. VIII; 32.)

As often, then, as we assist at Mass, let us remember that the place whereon we stand is holy ground; that we are in the presence of our great High Priest, Who, in "that He continueth forever, hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able also to save forever them that come to God by Him; always living to make intercession for us." (Hebr. VII;

24, 25.) "For", continues the apostle, "we have such a High Priest, Who is set on the right Hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens; a minister of the Holies and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord hath pitched and not man." (Hebr. VIII; 1, 2.) "Having, therefore, a confidence in the entering into the Holies, by the Blood of Christ; let us draw near with a true heart, in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water; let us hold fast the confession of our hope, without wavering; and let us consider one another to provoke unto charity and to Good works." (Hebr. X; 19, 22, 24.) Thus, you see, the apostle requires of the faithful to approach these mysteries with hearts well prepared by contrition, by faith, by hope, and by charity.

3. Let us now descend the altar-steps, and consider the banquet which is there prepared; fulfiling that saying of the Psalmist: the sons of men "shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure." (Ps. XXXV; 9.) In this mystery of the holy Eucharist is expressed a love, beyond which infinite Love itself cannot go. Jesus, in the tabernacle, is our Guest and bosom-Friend; Jesus, on the altar, is our atonement; and now, Jesus, in our breasts, is our Food, our very Life. Truly, God Himself could not have done more for us than this. "What is there that I ought to do more to My Vineyard, that I have not done to it?" (Is. V; 4.) And what kind of fruit has the vineyard of our soul

brought forth, to repay such loving care? Have we not reason to fear that reproach: "Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes; and it hath brought forth wild grapes?" (ib.) Whilst, therefore, we render thanks to God for having provided us with such a Divine banquet, let us also examine ourselves strictly on the kind of preparation we make to dispose ourselves for receiving it. "Let a man prove himseif; and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of the chalice." (I Cor. XI; 28.)

It is impossible that we should have a true relish for this heavenly Food, as long as we are attached to the pleasures of this world. Those Israelites who still longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt, loathed the manna which fell from heaven; whilst those who were spiritually inclined, found, in that manna, the sweetness of every taste. (Wisd. XVI; 20.) Let us, then, show our gratitude to God, for all that He has done for us in this holy place, by availing ourselves to the utmost of the graces there bestowed upon us. Let it be the desire of our hearts, to make our home here in this tabernacle where our Lord reposes; and establish between ourselves and Him that sweet inter-communion which He so much desires. Let us assist as often as we can, at the holy Mass, and join with the priest in offering up that adorable Victim Who is immolated for us on this altar. Let us frequently and devoutly partake of the Feast which His love has prepared for us, and fill our hearts with the fulness of Divine grace. If we are faithful to all these graces, God, on His part,

will be faithful to His promise: "My Eyes shall be open, and My Ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place; for I have chosen and have sanctified this place; that My Name may be there forever, and My Eyes and My Heart may remain there perpetually." (II Par. VII; 15, 16.)

DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

(From the Lesson.)

"*And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: 'Behold the tabernacle of God with men; and He will dwell with them.'* " (Apoc. XXI; 3.)

The festival which we celebrate this day and all through this octave, with such joyful pomp and solemnity, ranks, and deservedly so, amongst the greatest festivals of the Church. For by the feast of the Dedication of this Church, we, in fact, celebrate the solemn nuptials between our Lord Jesus Christ and His spotless bride, the Church. In order, my dear brethren, to enhance your appreciation of this festival, I would ask you to cast a glance back on the not very remote past; and think what kind of places those were, in which our forefathers met to offer up the adorable sacrifice; and what were the circumstances by which they were surrounded. You know that that holy sacrifice was offered up at the peril of the life of him who offered it; so that the faithful were obliged to hide themselves in the darkest recesses, and to disguise the holy mysteries with

ignominious surroundings. When, to the period of bloody persecution, succeeded that of contemptuous toleration, the Church had still to struggle with overwhelming poverty; and many of you are old enough to remember in what unworthy edifices, and with what unworthy accessories, the holy mysteries were celebrated by our immediate predecessors. But now all is changed. It is my lot to address you in a temple, I will not say worthy of God; for what can be worthy of Him? But, at least, worthy to be compared with any of those sacred edifices which adorn the land, and shelter the piety of Catholic hearts. Well indeed may I congratulate you on having such a temple in your midst.

You are now reaping the fruits of all the toil and tears, and cares and anguish, in which the foundations of this mission were laid by our predecessors. "Going, they went and wept, casting their seeds; but coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves." (Ps. CXXV; 6, 7.) It is right, therefore, that we should, on such an occasion as this, cast a retrospective glance on the past, if only that we might heighten our grateful appreciation of the many spiritual advantages and consolations which we now enjoy. This is the point, then, to which I wish to direct your attention on this occasion: "this is the tabernacle of God with men," where He dwells with them. Here then, at all events, God's sovereign rights over His creatures are acknowledged; here God has a house, which is His Own; where He is at home; in which He dwells. Moreover, it is as

worthy of Him as human piety and skill can make it. A fair and stately structure, solid without and beautiful within, adorned and furnished with every requisite that piety could suggest, good taste devise, and zeal could execute; whilst you, my brethren, by your loving care and solicitude, have shown that you "have loved the beauty of God's house, and the place where His glory dwelleth." (Ps. XXV; 8.)

But why, my brethren, does God need a house in the midst of us? When Solomon had finished building his temple, and poured forth his soul in thanksgiving, he cried out: "is it credible, then, that God should dwell with men on the earth? If heaven, and the heavens of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built!" (II Par. VI; 18.) No, my brethren, God has no need of a house for His Own sake; for His Divine immensity fills the universe. He is contained by nothing, Who Himself contains all things. But He has need of a home for our sakes. It is we who have need of some spot, consecrated by the Divine Presence, to which we may always have access; where we may hold communion with our God; where we may pour out our petitions to Him; where we may receive from Him those helps and graces which are necessary for us in every step of this life's pilgrimage.

Moreover, it was necessary that our Lord's sacramental Presence should have some spot consecrated to its reception, in which It might repose; that there should be some spot to which we might point, and say: behold the Body of the Lord: "behold where

we have laid Him." (Mark XVI; 6.) "Behold the tabernacle of God with Men." How sacred and venerable, then, is this edifice, consecrated by the Divine Presence! How everything in it, and about it, conspires to impress us with awe and veneration! We enter in; and, at once, we are conscious that we have left the busy, noisy world; and have entered an invisible, supernatural world. No sound breaks the solemn silence, save that of prayer and praise; no sight meets the eye, save that of objects which lift up the mind to Divine contemplation. Every gaze is turned to the Holy of Holies, to the holy hill from which our help comes. (Ps. CXX; 1.) We feel that we are in the presence of legions of blessed spirits, who throng the Court of their King. All the faculties of soul and body are subdued to that religious tone, which the majesty and sanctity of the place inspires.

Whenever, therefore, on entering the Church, we sprinkle ourselves with holy water, let us do so with becoming devotion, in order that that ceremony may accomplish the end for which it was instituted, namely, to purify us from worldly thoughts and preoccupations; that it may arm us against the assaults of the evil one; and render us less unworthy to associate with the choirs of angels, who surround the throne of their and our King. The first thing that meets our eye on entering the Church, is the baptismal font, the scene of a still more solemn and efficacious ablution, the well-spring of those living waters which have their source in the pierced Side

of our crucified Redeemer, from which there flowed Blood and Water. You have all, my dear brethren, passed through that sacred torrent. You have emerged therefrom purified and sanctified. You have all pledged yourselves, by the most solemn vows, to renounce Satan, with all his works and pomps. O then, as often as you pass that sacred font, pass it not thoughtlessly, carelessly, indifferently; but bethink you of that stainless robe, which you then and there received. Bewail the transgressions by which you have defiled that robe. Renew those vows, which you, then and there, pledged yourselves to keep until the day when our Lord shall come, to exact an account of all your thoughts, words and actions.

Next, you encounter the Confessional; that true mercy-seat, where "mercy exalteth itself above judgment." (James II; 13.) Who but an infinitely wise, and infinitely good God, could have devised so consoling, so beneficent, so salutary a means of anticipating the great day of reckoning, of healing the stricken, weary soul; of pouring oil and balm into its gaping wounds; of inspiring it with courage, fervour and piety; and, above all, of conveying to it the comforting assurance of forgiveness, and restitution of our forfeited birthright? As often, then, as we pass the sacred tribunal, let us enter the Courts of the Lord with joy, (Ps. XCIX; 4) with hearts overflowing with gratitude, that He has permitted us to wash our robes in the Blood of the Lamb. (Apoc. VII; 14.)

And now, at length, we stand on the verge of that sacred enclosure where the Holy of Holies is enshrined. There we see spread before us that holy table, whereon is the heavenly manna; the Bread of Life; the Body that was crucified for us; that Blood that was shed for us. O! if we did but know this gift of God! (Joh. IV; 10.) How bitter and unpalatable then would seem all other things in comparison with this most Divine banquet! There, too, is the altar of propitiation, on which the Lamb of God is daily immolated for us; whereon, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, the name of God is magnified amongst the nations, by this holy sacrifice and pure oblation. (Mal. I; 11.) By this admirable device of infinite wisdom and love, we are enabled to render to God homage and worship worthy of Himself. We are able to atone amply and superabundantly for all our transgressions. We are able to open the flood-gates of heaven, and to draw hence the copious, the inexhaustible torrents of Divine grace. We are able, in fine, to render adequate thanks, for all His mercies, to Him Whose mercy is infinite and endureth forever. (Ps. CV; 1.)

All this, and much more, which time will not permit me to dwell upon, is contained in those few words which we have chosen for our devout meditation: "Behold the tabernacle of God with men; and He will dwell with them." But enough has, I trust, been said, to move you to a more lively sense of gratitude for the benefits which God has bestowed upon

you, by placing His tabernacle in the midst of you. And since we can best show our gratitude to God for His gifts by making a good use of them; I trust that one effect of this meditation will be an efficacious resolution to avail yourselves of all those abundant resources of grace, by your fervent frequentation of the holy sacraments, and your devout assistance at those holy rites, for the celebration of which it has been solemnly dedicated.

May we, then, rejoice, not only in this beautiful edifice which has been consecrated to the Divine worship, but also in the steadfast progress in piety and fervour of those who frequent it. May we rejoice, not only that the external, material house of God is built up and beautified; but, still more, that the spiritual house of God which you are, is extended, amplified and adorned. If I may use the words of St. John: "I was exceeding glad when the brethren came and gave testimony to the truth in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth." (III Joh. 3.) May then this portion of Christ's flock be daily more and more edified; may it increase in number and in merit until it reaches the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ; (Eph. IV; 13) until it is fit to become a portion of that eternal Temple, where God dwells in the full assembly of the saints! (Ecclus. XXIV; 16.)

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10 Sermons for the Christian Year

TITLE

Vol. 3

DATE